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DIARIES AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

JAMES HARRIS,

FIRST EARL OF MALMESBURY;

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF

HIS MISSIONS TO THE COURTS OF MADRID, FREDERICK THE GREAT, CATHERINE THE SECOND, AND THE HAGUE;

AND HIS SPECIAL MISSIONS TO

BERLIN, BRUNSWICK, AND THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

EDITED BY HIS GRANDSON,

THE THIRD EARL.

32282

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1844.

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INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR.

I BELIEVE that I need make no apology to the Public for offering them the following compilation from my Grandfather's, the first Lord Malmesbury's, Papers, when I preface them with a reminder that he served the Crown in his public capacity from the year 1768 to 1797, and that he was for fifteen years after that period intimately connected in friendship and political action with the leading statesmen of the day. It will certainly be acknowledged that this range embraces the most eventful epoch of European history.

I have added a short Memoir of his Life, and being unable, from personal recollection, to give those *traits* of private character which enliven biographical sketches, I have preferred to let him, as it were, give an account of it himself. I have trespassed as little as I thought possible on my margin, by such notes only as may help the halting memory of the reader, and unite the broken links of a course of Despatches, Letters, and Diaries. In perusing them, the reader will recognize some anecdotes already known, or published; but they are all contemporaneous with Lord Malmesbury, and such as he had a personal opportunity of vouching for, and are, therefore, certified by his testimony as historical facts.

JAMES, first EARL OF MALMESBURY, born at Salisbury April 21st, 1746, was descended from a Mr. Harris, who in the year 1565 was living on his estate at Orcheston St. George, in Wiltshire, where the successive and simple monuments of his posterity record no ambition on their part to leave in life or in death the neighbourhood of its parish church. They had a house in the Close of Salisbury (which is one of the most beautiful spots I know in any English or foreign town), and here, with such of the Squires as were not in Parliament, they repaired in those days, when the Provincial Gentry filled and enlivened, during a portion of the year, our now deserted and mournful Cathedral Cities.

Lord Malmesbury's father first broke through the hereditary sameness of this existence, and became one of the most distinguished scholars of his day. His publications consisted of "Philosophical Treatises," and a Treatise on Grammar, which he called "Hermes." South, Bishop of London, styles it "the most beautiful example of analysis produced since the days of Aristotle," and the proof of how universally it was valued by persons who wished to have a reputation for learning is, that it was translated and published by command of the French Directory, by Thurot, in 1796. Mr. Harris was also Member of Parliament for Christchurch, and a Lord of the Treasury in 1763, and in 1774 became Secretary and Comptroller of the Queen's household. He sat in Parliament until his death, which took place in 1780. When he first took his seat John Townshend asked who he was, and being told that he had written on Grammar and Harmony,

observed, "Why does he come here, where he will hear neither?" His passion for music induced a close friendship between him and Handel, who left him, by will, his picture, and all his Operas in manuscript.

The interest which Mr. Harris's literary talents had obtained for him amongst the leading men of the time, enabled him to launch his son early into public life, and Lord Malmesbury constantly dwells (especially during his moments of success and public approbation) with the strongest gratitude on the advantages which he had reaped from his father's character. The following is an extract from a letter of Lord Malmesbury, written on this subject in 1800.

"To my father's precepts and example I owe every good quality I have. To *his* reputation, to *his* character, I attribute my more than common success in life. It was *these* that introduced me with peculiar advantage into the world; it was as *his* son that I first obtained friends and patrons. I had nothing in myself (and I speak at the distance of thirty-five years), not from affected modesty, but from a powerful recollection of what there was to entitle me to notice. Once, indeed, placed in a conspicuous and responsible situation, I was anxious to act becomingly in it, and even here I recur with pleasure to the same grateful source, for while my father lived (which was during the first twelve years of my public life) the strongest incentive I had to exert myself was in the satisfaction I knew he would derive from any credit I might acquire, and the many and distinguished honours I have since received have suffered a great diminution in my estimation from his being no longer a witness to them."

Of Lord Malmesbury's earliest years I can give no anecdote but the following one, related to me by his

kinsman, Lord Shaftesbury,* proving him to have been a bold and active boy.—As Mrs. Harris was walking with some friends before her house in the Close, she descried a person climbing up the spire of the Cathedral, and having obtained a glass the better to observe so perilous a feat, immediately dropped it, with the exclamation, "Good heavens! it is James!" The astonished lady had identified her only son upon the apex of the tallest steeple in Great Britain.

At four years old he was sent to a dame's school, and at seven to Mr. Hales's grammar-school at Salisbury, where, by his own account, he met with very harsh treatment, which was increased at any appearance of complaint; and thence to Winchester, where he remained till he was sixteen. He himself describes the next period of his education in a letter dated 1800. "I left Winchester in September 1762. I had been indulged there too much, Dr. Warton erred in the contrary extreme from Mr. Hale. I did nearly what I liked, and as boys always wish to be men, I thought myself a man too soon. My father, at that time in office and living in London, kept me with him for six months before he sent me to Oxford. I cannot even now decide whether this was a wrong or right step (I speak as to the result of my own conduct). I believe the seeing many of the leading men in Administration, hearing them converse on public business, contributed to form my mind to think on public affairs, and to give me an interest in them which, probably, otherwise I might never have acquired; but the mixing at that age (seventeen) and raw from school, in all the gaiety and dissipation of

* Lord Malmesbury's grandfather married Lady Elizabeth Ashley, daughter of the second Lord Shaftesbury.

London, filled my mind at the same time with false objects of admiration, false notions of excellence, and gave me, in my own conceit, a knowledge of the world so much greater than I supposed my fellow-collegians could possibly possess, that I apprehend I carried to the University a considerable share of self-sufficiency, and no great propensity to attend lectures, and conform to college rules; and, in fact, the two years of my life I look back to as most unprofitably spent were those I passed at Merton. The discipline of the University happened also at this particular moment to be so lax, that a Gentleman Commoner was under no restraint, and never called upon to attend either lectures, or chapel, or hall. My tutor, an excellent and worthy man, according to the practice of all tutors at that moment, gave himself no concern about his pupils. I never saw him but during a fortnight, when I took into my head to be taught trigonometry. The set of men with whom I lived were very pleasant, but very idle fellows. Our life was an imitation of High Life in London; luckily drinking was not the fashion, but what we did drink was claret, and we had our regular round of evening card parties, to the great annoyance of our finances. It has often been a matter of surprise to me, how so many of us made our way so well in the world, and so creditably. Charles Fox, Lord Romney, North, Bishop of Winchester, Sir J. Stepney, Lord Robert Spencer, William Eden (now Lord Auckland), and my good and ever-esteemed friend the last Lord Northington, were amongst the number. I left Oxford at the beginning of the long vacation 1765, and I passed nearly the whole of the next thirty-five years on the Continent; and if a long residence abroad kept me for a while distant

from my family and friends, and distant from my native country, it did not estrange my love and affection from either; on the contrary, it afforded me many and most striking reasons to value and cherish them still more. And here I will make an assertion, grounded on experience and conviction, and which may be applied as a never-failing test, that an Englishman who, after a long absence from England returns to it with feelings and sentiments partial to other countries, and adverse to his own, has no *real mind*, is without the powers of discernment and plain easy comparison, and has no title to enjoy the superior moral, political, and local advantages to which he is born, but of which he is insensible and unworthy."

On leaving Oxford my Grandfather was sent to study at Leyden, where he remained a year. His Journal, which he began at this time, evinces (notwithstanding his own unfavourable account of his proficiency) a great disposition to study, and a considerable knowledge of the classics. He spent many hours daily in writing and reading, and the rest in studying the History of Europe, and of its International Treaties, and in making himself acquainted with the Dutch laws and constitution. He frequented, as much as possible, the public amusements and society of the Hague and Amsterdam, gaining a knowledge of the people, and making many friendships, which proved of essential service to him when, twenty years afterwards, he saved the States from French dominion.

After returning home for eight months, in 1766, he left England again in 1767, on a journey to Holland, Prussia, Poland, and Paris, and I have taken up his Journal at the period of his visit to Berlin, where Frederick the Great, although passed his prime, reign-

ed in the full vigour of his tyrannical and eccentric genius.

In the autumn of 1767, Mr. Harris, through Lord Shelburne's interest, was appointed Secretary of Embassy at the Court of Madrid under Sir James Gray; and, in 1770, having been left by Sir James Chargé des Affaires in Spain, he had the good fortune to undertake, upon his own responsibility, the affair of the Falkland Islands, which he conducted with such temper and firmness that the issue, so honourable to us, of that dispute, at once established his diplomatic reputation, and, at the early age of twenty-four, obtained for him the post of Minister at Berlin in the following year. He remained at the Court of Frederick four years, during which period the dismemberment of Poland took place, without an effort, and scarcely a word of disapprobation, from our Government.

In 1776 Mr. Harris gave up his Mission; and, returning to England, married the second daughter of Sir George Cornewall, whose eldest sister had married Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Lord Minto. In 1777, Mr. Harris was sent as Minister to the Court of the Empress Catherine II., at Petersburg. He had here to struggle against the implacable enmity of Frederick to England and our Ministers, and with the Empress's false professions of friendship for a country which she was rejoiced to see occupied, and occupying France in a hot war, whilst she matured her projects against Turkey.

The two brief accessions of Mr. Fox to power during this period, from the peculiar favour with which that Minister was regarded by Frederick and Catherine, lightened his labours for a time; but the dislike and contempt in which England was held by all the

Northern Courts towards the close of the American war, and the wearing disputes on the Neutral League, rendered his post one of immense exertion and anxiety. His *esprit* and remarkable conversational talents gained him, however, much more of the Empress's personal favour than his colleagues' political popularity for them; and this, joined to the friendship of Prince Potemkin, enabled him to hold his ground and sustain (as he calls it himself) "an equal fight" at Petersburg. His conduct was much approved by the successive Governments under which he served during his mission there, and he received from the King the Order of the Bath in 1780.

The climate of Russia had in the year 1782 completely broken his health, and he received from Mr. Fox, at the same time, permission to return to England, and the choice of a mission to Spain or the Hague. The first was an Embassy, the latter an appointment of the Second Class; but it was also at this moment the scene of the most active political operations. Sir James Harris did not hesitate in his choice, and at once preferred it. Soon after his arrival in England, in 1784, Fox was superseded by Pitt, and his post remained in abeyance.

Sir James Harris had been, since 1770, Member for the borough of Christchurch, from which the Treasury under Lord North's former Government had, in vain, tried to expel him (although he served it abroad), and his opinions were decidedly those of the Whigs of that time. He had the strongest personal admiration and friendship for Fox, and now supported him in the House of Commons, and voted for him at his famous Westminster election. The sense, however, of his abilities appears to have been so strong that Mr. Pitt, at the

end of 1784, very liberally offered him the same appointment, and he accepted it, after having consulted and received the entire approbation of Mr. Fox and the Duke of Portland, whom he considered as his political leaders; and he reached the Hague in Dec., 1784, with the rank of Minister, but with an Ambassador's appointments. Sir James Harris states that the emoluments of his profession were so inadequate at this period, that when he left Russia he had diminished his private fortune by 20,000*l*. These volumes will show the great temper and ability which he displayed during this stormy mission at the Hague, and the almost unbounded confidence which the Government placed in his advice and opinions on Foreign Politics. Having saved the Stadtholder and Holland from the apparent certainty of exile and French subjection by the great plan he formed, and eventually brought to bear, he effected a Treaty between England and Holland, and England and Prussia, and was made Ambassador at the Hague, and created Baron Malmesbury in 1788, receiving from his Prussian Majesty leave to add the Prussian Eagle to his arms and the royal liveries; and from the Stadtholder his motto, "Je maintiendrai."

After passing a short time in Switzerland, he came home in 1788, and still supported his old friends, voting against Pitt on the Regency Bill. But in 1793, when Fox declared himself ready to acknowledge the French Republic, Lord Malmesbury joined in the secession which the Duke of Portland, Lord Loughborough, Burke, Sir Gilbert Elliot, Lord Spencer, and many other Whigs made from the ranks of their great leader, whose friendship he seems, however, in no respect to have lost in consequence.

He was immediately sent by Mr. Pitt to Berlin, to attempt to reclaim Frederick William, King of Prussia, who, with the dishonesty and weakness which characterized most public actions of his life, showed strong symptoms of breaking his late Treaty with England, and conciliating revolutionized France. Lord Malmesbury succeeded in making him acknowledge his obligations, and in inducing him to sign another Treaty with England and Holland in 1793, which he broke almost before the signatures were dry.

In 1794 Lord Malmesbury received orders to ask of the Duke of Brunswick his daughter in marriage for the Prince of Wales, and having married Her Royal Highness by Proxy, he accompanied her to England. His account of this transaction shows how little hope he himself had of the happiness of this union; and although he received no discretionary power whatever in the matter, he was never forgiven by the Prince, with whom, until then, he had been on terms of great intimacy and confidence.

In 1796 and 1797 he went to Paris and Lisle, to attempt to negotiate a peace with the French Republic. It is evident that the Directory, if ever they wished it, did not dare to conclude one; and even M. Thiers, in his History of the Revolution, renders England the justice of being sincere in her overtures of 1797,* (though he strangely enough denies it in 1796); I say strangely, because he argues that a man whose character stood so high in his profession as Lord Malmesbury's, would not have accepted the conduct of a sham negotiation, which might attach to him the odium of a failure.

* Every private and public document in the Harris Papers prove the anxious sincerity for peace which England brought to these negotiations.

Soon after this last Mission, he was attacked by deafness to such a degree as to render him unfit, in his own opinion, to be again employed on any foreign service of importance.

In 1800 he was created an Earl, and Viscount Fitzharris; and Pitt contemplated again renewing, either through him or Mr. Grenville, his overtures of peace to France; but soon after he went out of Office, and Mr. Addington made the Peace of Amiens.

Lord Malmesbury continued, in consequence of the above-mentioned infirmity, to decline both from him and his successors all further employment; but during the lives of Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Portland, he remained in the most intimate political confidence of those Ministers and their principal colleagues.

From this period until the end of his life he passed most of his time between London and Park-place (his seat near Henley), receiving constantly, and with the same pleasure, the rising generation of Statesmen and literary men, as he had shown formerly in associating with his own distinguished contemporaries. He early appreciated the talents of Mr. Canning, Lord Granville, Lord Palmerston, and George Ellis,* whose letters are written to him in a style of more than common regard; and Mr. Canning, as Pitt had before placed his son Lord Fitzharris in the Treasury, made him in 1807 his Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office.

After Napoleon's occupation of Holland, the exiled Stadtholder and the heroic Princess of Orange were Lord Malmesbury's constant guests during their banishment from that country, which he had formerly rescued from France.—He lived to see them restored

* Mr. Ellis was the accomplished friend of Canning, and wrote with him in the Anti-Jacobin, &c.

to it; he lived also to enjoy the demonstrated truth and final triumph of that Foreign Policy whose principles had been laid down in his early life, and advocated by his great leaders and himself; that it is from France alone England has aught to fear, but that her aggressions can ever be successfully resisted.

For the last ten years of his life he kept a "Self-controlling Journal," which shows as much religious feeling as undiminished vigour and moral courage. As I do not think it expedient to publish it (although it also contains much political matter), I only quote the last sentences, written two weeks before his death.

"Thou hast completed thy seventy-fourth year, having been permitted to live longer than any of thy ancestors as far back as 1606.—Thy existence has been without any great misfortune, and without any acute disease, and has been one for which thou ought'st to be extremely grateful.—Be so, in praise and thanksgiving towards the Supreme Being, and by preparing thyself to employ the remnant of it 'wisely and discreetly.'—Thy next step will, probably, be the last.—Strive not to delay the period of its arrival, nor lament at its near approach.—Thou art too exhausted, both in mind and body, to be of service to thy country, thy friends, or family.—Thou art fortunate in leaving thy children well and happy; be content to join thy parent Earth calmly, and with becoming resignation.—Such is thy imperious duty.—Vale."

With no disease, but with a constitution completely worn out, he expired in the full possession of his intellectual faculties, at his house in Hill Street, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, on the 20th of November, 1820, and was entombed in Salisbury Cathedral.

When I first went abroad, fifteen years ago, many

of his contemporaries were still living. I found his reputation everywhere established, and received from a variety of persons who had known him, a degree of attention and kindness which I could only attribute to their agreeable recollections of his merits.

He seems to have possessed, in the prosecution of any plan, much perseverance and fearlessness of responsibility; and, in transacting affairs, a knowledge of human nature which gave him great command over the minds of others. Mons. de Talleyrand, in speaking of him to me, said "Je crois que Lord Malmesbury était le plus habile Ministre que vous aviez de son temps; c'était inutile de le devancer; il falloit le suivre de près. Si on lui laissoit le dernier mot il avait toujours raison."

Mirabeau, when employed as a French Agent at Berlin in 1786, and noticing to his Court the rumour of the Prussian march upon Holland, which afterwards completely succeeded, treats it as absurd, "et seulement la conception personnelle de cet audacieux et rusé Harris qui veut à tout prix faire sa fortune, et enferrer dans un accès de fougue sa nation plus habile que sage." These are the sentiments of his political opponents, against whose country England was arrayed, either in open war or diplomatic intrigue for seventy years of Lord Malmesbury's life.*

I was too young at the time of my Grandfather's death to be able to speak of him accurately from recollection, but I may fairly judge of his character from the affection with which his children have regarded his memory, and from a mass of private correspondence which he has left behind him. The letters of

* From the day of the battle of Culloden, in 1746 (on which Lord Malmesbury was born), to that of the battle of Waterloo in 1815.

his friends of every class (and many are from the most eminent men of his time), are full of expressions of personal regard and personal interest. His own are stamped with the seal of a kind and generous spirit, without a prejudice to be found, saving the glorious one, that as there is nothing equal to England on the face of the Earth, so no exertion nor sacrifice on the part of her People can possibly be too great in defence of her freedom and honour.*

This seemed to be the directing impulse to his opinions and ambition, and he chose for his motto, when raised to the Peerage, *ubique patriam reminisci.*

MALMESBURY.

* The true and invaluable expression by which Mons. Thiers designates Mr. Pitt. "ce pur Anglais," might be as deservedly claimed by Lord M.

DIARIES AND CORRESPONDENCE.

BERLIN AND WARSAW.

FROM JULY 17, 1767, TO MARCH 20, 1768.

EXTRACTS FROM MR. HARRIS'S DIARY.

1767.

JULY 17th and 18th.—On the road to, and at Potsdam, read over a book, entitled "Des Délits et des Peines," translated from the Italian, and which appeared only the last year. A fine subject, and as well treated as can be expected from a man who has the freedom of his thoughts so much restrained, both by the government he lives under, and the religion he embraces. Many great and humane sentiments in it. One might almost say of the number of objections he finds to all the practised modes of punishing, &c., that were they to be adopted there would be no way left of administering justice. One traces, however, through the whole, a feeling and liberal writer, and one who employs his pen for the cause of humanity against tyranny and oppression. A laudable task in any one, but much more so in him who owes the idea of it to his own genius, and who is bold enough to produce it the first in his own country. The few following words* show the author's feelings:—"Si en soutenant

* The original will be found in page 35 of the third edition "Dei Delitti e delle Pene." Lausanne, 1765.

les droits des hommes et de l'invincible verité, je pouvois arracher à la tyrannie et à l'ignorance quelqu' une de leurs victimes, les larmes, et les benedictions d'un seul innocent dans les transports de sa joie me consoleraient du mépris du genre humain."

I read over "Les Mémoires de Brandenbourg,"* in three volumes, quarto, at Berlin, in 1767, soon after they were published. This last edition has nothing new in it, but a treatise on the army, wherein the royal author deduces its rise and progress from the earliest times down to his father's death. He might have added, that in his own single reign, he has done as much as all his ancestors did in theirs put together; for, since his coming to the throne, he has raised it from seventy thousand to near one hundred and fifty thousand men.

I cannot help remarking a most notorious blunder, and which would almost incline one to doubt the authenticity of other facts there asserted. In his second volume, page 155, he says,—"George II. avoit formé le projet de se rendre Souverain dans la Grande Bretagne." This was to be effected by the Excise Bill: "Introduire l'accise c'étoit enchaîner la nation." The absurdity and impossibility of this is so apparent to every reader, be he ever so little informed about our constitution, that it does not merit dwelling upon. I have heard Sir Joseph Yorke† and Sir Andrew Mitchell‡ both say, that they have demonstrated this to the King several times, but that his Majesty would never pay attention to them, and could never be persuaded to strike it out in any of his after editions. He perhaps was satisfied of the truth of it from his father, who, possibly, being an implacable enemy

* Written by Frederick the Great, at this date King of Prussia.

† English minister at the Hague.

‡ English minister at Berlin.

of George II., might have made him believe it. He also might not choose to be convinced of the contrary out of pride, as it might betray his ignorance to efface anything he had once published. One reflection might be added, viz., that as long as he confines himself to anecdotes of his own ancestors, and facts relating to his own kingdom, he is to be depended on; but when he attempts to form an opinion on other countries, he gets out of his depth, and errs as well in point of judgment as in point of veracity.

The chief amusement of the King of Prussia is playing on the flute, which he does in a masterly manner. I had an opportunity of hearing him for a long time, as I was waiting in his antechamber, to be presented to him.

Though no person is ever permitted to be present at his concerts but the performers, and some very few others, yet so afraid is he of playing false, that when he is to try some new piece of music, he shuts himself up some hours beforehand in his closet to practise it, and even then when he begins it with the accompaniments he always trembles.

He has a very fine collection of these instruments, and is particularly nice in the keeping of them. He has appointed a man who has nothing else to do but look after them, and preserve them dry or moist as the season requires. They are all made by the same man, and he pays a hundred ducats for each flute. In the last war, when he distributed false money to every one, he took care that his flute-maker should be paid in good coin, fearing that otherwise he would impose upon him, and give him bad instruments.

Great contradictions in the character of this monarch —profusion of expense in some articles, and the most niggardly economy in others. As a proof of the first, the sum of money sunk in erecting the Château Neuf, near Sans Souci, where every room is furnished in the most expensive manner, and that not in taste, but with loads of gilding, and tawdry furniture. This edifice is his own architecture, and I think will not do him honour. It is built of the most flaming coloured brick, intermixed with stone pillars and niches, which are crowded, not with single statues, but whole groups, and these not after antiques, but according to the fancy of the workmen. The disposition of the rooms in the inside is very bad, full of doors—four in the room designed for his bed-chamber.

One would imagine that in his buildings he has imitated Louis XIV. Like him, who preferred the bottom of Versailles to the terrace of St. Germains, he has given a preference for the situation of this new palace to a marshy meadow, before the side of a hill close by—Like him, he has instituted "Une Ecole Militaire, un Hôpital des Invalides, etc—"

As proofs of his meanness, one might cite the smallness of his pay to all about his court, and employed by him; but above all, the economy that is attended to in all manner of festivities given at his expense. On these occasions, he suffers no one to interfere, but orders everything, down to the quantity of wax candles, himself. I had frequent opportunities of observing this at the feast given in honour of the Prince of Dessau's marriage, at which I was present. All the apartments, except those immediately dedicated to supper or cards, were lighted by one single candle. The supper itself was badly served, and without dessert—the wines bad, and the quantity of them stinted.

I asked, after dancing, for some wine and water, and was answered, "The wine is all gone, but you may have some tea." It must be observed, that these are not public entertainments where all mankind is admitted, and where these sort of restrictions are allowable, but those to which only people of a certain rank, Foreign Ministers and Strangers, are suffered to come.

I saw the King myself, directing his servants in the lighting up the ball-room, and telling them where, and how they should place the candles. While this operation was performing, the Queen, the Royal Family, and company, were waiting, literally in the dark, as his Majesty did not begin this ceremony till supper was finished, and no one dared presume to give orders to have it done.

When I was to be presented to him, his Grand Maréchal, by mistake, carried me into a wrong room in the great apartment, instead of that appointed by the King upstairs in his own. When he passed by, he would not suffer me to be presented that day; and turning to the Maréchal said, "Sachez, quand on présente des gens à quelqu'un, que c'est toujours chez lui." The next day, however, we rectified our blunder, and I had a most gracious audience. He has a most distinct and energetical way of expressing himself, the reverse of the rest of the Royal Family, who speak very quick and inarticulate. He almost always speaks French, and, I have heard, talks German badly; but from some caprice or other, however, he would talk nothing but German to the Prince of Dessau, and instead of giving him the titles of Monseigneur, or Votre Altesse, called him always "Mein Prinz," Mon Prince, an inferior title given only to Polish or Russian princes. He was never well with his father, and was a long time confined by him at Custrin, for a scheme concerted between his mother and him to marry

him clandestinely to our Princess Amelia. This was carried on so far that everything was prepared for his flight, as from the natural antipathy his father had to George the Second, he knew he could not get his consent. It was discovered, his father was in the greatest rage, talked of cutting off his head — did actually imprison him a long time—executed one of those in the secret, and would have served the rest so, had they not saved themselves by flight. It ended in his father's making him marry a sister of the Duke of Brunswick, whom he never liked, by whom he has had no children, and with whom he lived no longer than he was obliged to do, during the life of his father.

The hatred between the late Kings of Prussia and England began by the quarrel they had when boys, and was carried on with the greatest inveteracy, on both sides, to the day of their deaths. George called Frederick "Mon frère le Sergent," and Frederick, George — "Mon frère le Maître à dancer." When the King of Prussia was on his deathbed, and was surrounded by his Queen, his sons, &c., he asked the priest, "Must I, to go to Paradise, forgive all my enemies?" On receiving for answer, that without it, it was impossible — he turned round to his Queen, and said, — "Eh bien donc Dorothée écrivéz à votre frère, dites lui que je lui pardonne tout le mal qu'il m'a fait. Oui, dit-il, dites lui que je lui pardonne, mais attendez que je sois mort."

The present King is a great taker of snuff. I could not even get a sight of his snuff-boxes, of which he has a most magnificent collection. That he carries is of an enormous size, and he takes it, not by pinches, but by handfulls. It is difficult to approach him without sneezing. They pretend that the perquisite that comes

to the valets de chambre from the snuff they get from drying his handkerchiefs is very considerable.

It has been reported that he never exposed himself in battle. This is absolutely false; he has had his horse killed under him more than once; was likewise shot through the skirt of his coat, and at another time had a tweezer-case beat flat in his side pocket by a musket ball. The battle of Rosbach was that which, in England, we looked upon to be the most glorious, and the completest victory; it certainly merited the first epithet, it being gained by 18,000, against 60,000; but not the latter, as there were not above 5000 taken and killed. We in England thought it would put an end to the German War, and were so angry with Sir Andrew Mitchell for representing in several of his despatches, that it was not of such consequence, as to recal him, and send Sir Joseph Yorke in his place. Sir Joseph on his coming, found the truth of what Sir Andrew had asserted, and reported it as such to the ministry at home, on which the one was continued, and the other returned to the Hague.

The French, elated by their success over the Duke of Cumberland, had no other ideas but of ruining the King of Prussia, and carrying him prisoner to Paris. He, on his side, treated them with the greatest contempt. He was at table when he was told they were in full march, and on hearing it he said, "Dinons premièrement, et puis nous verrons." And, in effect, his camp was standing, his men unarmed, and nothing prepared at three, and at five o'clock he had gained the victory. Though the last war gives frequent proofs of his abilities as a general, yet it does not of his humanity. In Saxony, he himself entered a house of Count Bruhl's, and with his

cane began the pillaging of it, by breaking a pier glass, and stood by afterwards to see that his men did not leave anything undestroyed. Perhaps his avarice might lead him to this, as all the pillage of these houses was sent to Berlin, where perhaps, by selling their furniture to Jews, &c., he got twenty thousand crowns, for what was, as it stood, worth two hundred thousand. His *fort* is not so much his courage, nor what we generally understand by conduct; but consists in a surprising discernment in the day of battle, how to gain the most advantageous ground, where to place the proper sort of arms, whether horse or foot, and in the quickest coup d'œil to distinguish the weak part of the enemy.

There is no surer way for an officer to pay his court to him, than, when he has ordered a punishment to be inflicted on a soldier, to exceed his commission, and instead of giving four hundred lashes, as he was told—to give five hundred. The most ferocious and brutal are sure of promotion with him; a glaring instance in the present Governor of Berlin just named, General Ramines, who treats both officers and men with an astonishing rigour and discipline.

The King asked Woronzow, the late Chancellor of Russia, why the Jews were not tolerated at Petersburg. The other, after having taken some time to consider, very gravely answered, "Sire, parcequ'ils ont crucifié notre Seigneur."

When I was at Dresden, Mr. Stanhope showed me the correspondence of Sir Charles Hotham, who was sent to negotiate the marriage of the Prince of Wales with the present King's sister, afterwards Margravine of Bareith, and, at the same time, that of Princess Amelia with the

then Prince of Prussia. It appears that the late King was an irresolute man, brutal, and a great enemy to his son; Sir Charles left Berlin on an affront he received from him, who, on Sir Charles's representing to him the glaring misconduct of one of his ministers, answered, "Nous avons eu assez de cela," and flinging away a letter he had in his hand, immediately quitted the room. He was ready enough to acquiesce in the marriage of his daughter, but would never hear of that of his son exclusively; whereas we were more inclined to the latter than to the former.

Sir Charles, in these letters, speaks of the present King as the most *modest, benevolent, timid, dejected* young man he ever saw—!

When it was told the King that we had taken Quebec, he turned about to Sir Andrew Mitchell, who was near him, and said, "Est-ce vrai qu'à la fin vous avez pris Quebec?" "Oui, Sire," said Sir Andrew, "par l'aide de Dieu." "Comment dit le Roi, le bon Dieu est-il aussi de vos alliés?" "Oui, Sire, et c'est le seul à qui nous ne payions pas de subsides," answered Sir Andrew.

The Queen, very unfortunate in her Great Marshals; the present Waterslieben, a most empty fellow; on presenting you he tells you, "Peut-être sa Majesté vous parlera, en ce cas-là il faut lui repondre, et n'oubliez pas toujours de faire une révérence."

The late Morian still more thick. Sir Charles Williams wrote him a letter recommending Lord Essex, and said, after the common compliments, "Vous pouvez être sur que ce n'est pas lui qui a eu la tête coupée, dans le temps de la reine Elizabeth." This was beyond the Great Marshal's comprehension; and when he presented Lord Essex to the Queen, he said, "Madame, le Comte d'Essex, mais

j'assure votre Majesté que ce n'est pas lui qui a été décapité par la Reine Elizabeth." This same hero was present at a siege ; but so confused are his ideas that he cannot tell whether he was of the besieging side, or besieged.

The King supping at Leipsick, with a small company, asked Coccey, who was just come from England, what sort of wine that was we called Claret, and whether he could get him some of it—the other said, certainly ; he would send for a hogshead. "*A hogshead!*" replied the King, "how much does it cost?" "A crown a bottle," says the other. "If so," answered his Majesty, "send only for a dozen bottles," *et il faut que j'écorche un paysan Saxon pour me rembourser.* This is indisputably true, as I had it from General Coccey, a man of undoubted veracity. When he was about to send a minister to Denmark, he, destined for the commission, represented the smallness of the pay, and impossibility of maintaining with it, either table or equipage. "Vous êtes un prodigue, dit le Roi, car sachez qu'il est beaucoup plus sain d'aller à pied qu'en voiture, et que pour manger, la table d'autrui est toujours la meilleure."

Tuesday, October 27th.—I entered Poland about halfway between Glogau and Frauenstadt, which is the first station in that country. I confess that I found the air of a Republic refreshing, after having passed so long a time in such a despotic country. Frauenstadt bore, however, few marks of the blessings of liberty—bad houses, in ruins, great appearance of poverty, and crowds of Jews and beggars ; and here, I may say, once for all, that the few towns I passed through on the road are of the most pitiful sort. Posen is the largest and best ; it is the capital of a province of the same name, and is a Bishop's see. My intention was to have arrived here the first day,

but I could not attain it. The post-master, at Schmeigel, three miles beyond Frauenstadt, used all his eloquence to detain me, argued the badness of the road, the length of the station, the possibility of being robbed and murdered, it being on the frontiers, and, ultimately, which had as much weight with me as any of his arguments, because I believed it the truest, the impossibility of furnishing me with horses sooner than the next morning. I left this hole, however, at two o'clock on Wednesday morning, and never went to bed from that time till Friday, the 30th of October, the day of my arrival at Warsaw, a distance of forty-seven German miles.

I had opportunities on the road of seeing the genius of the country, by finding that all there, who had any sort of pretensions to speak at all, always talked politics. Fielding's pen would have drawn good scenes out of what I heard. The face of the country, open and fallow, for the beginning; latterly, you get into woods twenty or thirty English miles long. Villages, such as they are, frequent; but the greatest poverty reigns. No houses, but huts: all the family in one miserable room. The head of it has a sort of mock bed; the rest lie on the floor, and the children that have the advantage to be small enough, creep into the oven. The only comfort they seem to enjoy is, a thorough plenty of fuel, they being able to procure wood, merely for the pains of fetching it. The horses go quick, and one is more expeditiously served, though somewhat dearer than in Brandenbourg. I got in less time from Schmeigel to Warsaw, though almost double the distance, than from Berlin to Glogau. I must remark that, in every place worthy to be called a town, there were Russian troops, even at Frauenstadt. I found the immediate environs full of the remains of their encampment, which was but

just broken up, as they had surrounded the town during the Diet.

This extraordinary Diet was held October 4, 1767, immediately under the direction of Russia. Whilst it lasted, eight thousand Russian troops surrounded the town, and two thousand encamped in the Russian Ambassador's garden, who, for the time being, was in every respect absolute monarch.

In consequence of this authority, he caused to be carried off, as it is supposed to Siberia, the two Bishops of Kiovi and Cracow, because they thought proper to speak a little too freely against the assembly.

Till the beginning of this reign, the Crown-general, and the great Treasurer, had between them, in a manner, the reins of government. The one commanded the army, the other disposed of the revenues without being responsible for their conduct to any one but the Diet; and the facility of breaking up one of these meetings gave them full scope to exercise their great authority as they thought proper.

At the Diet held immediately after the election, the King by the consent of Russia, got this power curtailed, and obliged these officers to render an account of their separate functions to the *majority* of Nonces present. This was already a great point gained, but his Majesty contrived to make this more advantageous, by inserting some equivocal words in the bill (which the Russian Minister either overlooked or did not understand), that would admit of being construed, "That all revenue matters and all military matters could be determined by a majority. In other words, all affairs of state; for, under those two heads, they are all comprehended. Having

gone thus far with success, there was nothing necessary to complete it but the waiting for a favourable opportunity to put it in execution; and here was the rock on which they split. Had they stayed till Russia was engaged at home in some internal broils, or abroad by a war, they would have carried all before them, and the government of this country, instead of being determined by the unanimity of voices, would have been in the hands of the plurality,—a most essential difference, and which must, according to the nature of those that have votes, have rendered the King absolute. But the vivacity of his Majesty joined to the ill-advice of those around him, would not allow of this delay; and they chose a moment, (the Diet previous to the present,) when Russia was in all her glory, to make use of this power, and to manifest the right they had so to do, and began by attacking the Dissidents.* This step, and with great reason, alarmed the Court last mentioned, and also that of Prussia. Both immediately presented remonstrances; and here again did the Ministry, if it might be so called, at Warsaw, commit a second error; for, instead of drawing in their horns, they persisted, and obliged the Empress to employ force.

The King of Prussia would willingly have joined to it two regiments of Hussars, but she would not hear of it.

This force soon changed the face of things, and obliged the Diet now sitting to be convoked, in which they have or will undo all that has been done. This present Diet was opened the 5th of October, when the kingdom was in the following state:

In consequence of not having paid the least attention to the two separate declarations of the Empress (which she had caused to be presented by her ambassador, Prince

* Protesting Sectarians.—Ed.

Repnin, at the Diet in 1766), in which the "griefs" of the Dissidents were set forth, and redress demanded, she had marched near twenty thousand men into the country, and gave out, that she would redress the grievances* of the malcontents, who, to the number of sixty thousand, were then confederated, with Prince Radzivil at their head. This confederation was caused by the jealousy of some of the great, who were fearful of the consequence of such innovation introduced in their government as the decision on such essential points by a plurality instead of an unanimity. This gained a great number of Poles to her side, who being bitter enemies to the court, flattered themselves that by this means they should overthrow the King; and were so eager on this subject, that they never gave themselves time to reflect that the establishing of the Dissidents was the chief object of Russia. Their eyes were soon opened, however, and they were obliged in all their protests to mention the Dissidents, and those of the Greek Church, as a persecuted part of the Commonwealth; and of course as one for whom they demanded redress. In short, with so much art did Russia play her part, that she obliged Prince Radzivil to present a project to the King and Diet assembled, in which it was proposed that they should delegate their power into the hands of a certain number, who should be authorized to treat, and conclude plenipotentiarily with the Russian ambassador on all the motives of their "griefs," as well those of the Dissidents as others. The extraordinariness of such a proposal, and the blow it carried with it to their liberty, met with but little objection; and for this evident reason, for the two Bishops of Kiovi and Cracow thinking proper to speak against it, were both the same night seized, and sent away no one knows where. The

* Religious grievances.—Ed.

next day the project was read a second time, and assented to very quietly. The Diet postponed itself till February, and gave all their power into the hands of about twenty-four people. These alternately meet at the Primate's and Prince Repnin's three times a week, there to debate what is to be done, or rather to assent to what the Prince Ambassador proposes: the fate of the two Bishops being so strong before their eyes, that no one dares to contradict, or even object; and he on his side orders with as much authority as they obey with humility. To such a condition are the liberties of this famous Republic reduced.

The language of the people on this occasion is different. The true old patriotic Pole calls it the "coup de grace" to his liberty; that they are become the vassals of Russia, and, as great slaves as they are, I have heard these say, "Autrefois je me faisais gloire de dire que j'étois Polonais, actuellement j'en ai honte." Again, "Tout est perdu; il ne nous reste que notre vertu." Others less zealous, and perhaps more reasonable, say, it was a step not to be avoided. "What pretensions had they to oppose an army of thirty thousand men?" Instead of doing good, it must have totally overturned the Republic,—"Si nous étions en état de battre, nous aurions bien fait de nous battre; mais desarmés comme nous sommes et étant obligés de céder, pourquoi ne pas céder de bonne grace?" These heroes, in answer to those who cry out against the little respect paid to the briefs presented by the Pope's nuncios, say,—"Le Pape est fou; que faut-il que nous fassions avec un morceau de papier contre trente mille hérétiques bien armés et bien disciplinés?" A third set, of which is the court,* through ne-

* The last King of Poland, Stanislaus, formerly lover to Catherine, was placed by her on the throne of that country.—Ed.

cessity, call it a salutary measure, that the Russians ought to be regarded as their protectors, not oppressors, as without their interposition a civil war must have ensued.

The King's brother said to me,—"Why will people look on this as a case of religion, when in fact it is simply a political one? Ill-minded people give it that turn to render *us* odious, and to sow sedition amongst the vulgar." It is too evident, however, that this was a *façon de parler*, every action proving too clearly the contrary. I could not help being struck by a visit I made to the Pope's nuncio, a man of great parts and vivacity; but by the ill-reception he has met here, and the fruitless efforts he has made, absents himself in a great measure from all company. Immediately on our entering, he began,—"Why are the courtiers inflamed against me? What I have done was my duty. It was the order of my court to present my briefs. I did it, but I did no more; I did not endeavour to promote faction. The religion of this country is my province; the political part of it I never meddled with. I am as much bound to support the one, as I am to desist from interfering with the other. I foresee, though," continued he, "a total change; its very basis is shaken; in a short time neither I nor any of my brethren shall find a sanctuary here." This was talk, but it was that of a true Italian, for he had taken every step to inflame the people; said, even when he presented his briefs,—"Be on your guard, defend your ancient and fundamental laws, the heavy hand of oppression hangs over you; but that of the Lord is for you." Here I may mention a thing, that, had it happened, would either have prevented the seizing the Bishops, or else have brought all the *corps diplomatique* on the back of Russia, viz., if they had taken shelter in

the nuncio's house. But these prelates were too great patriots for that: indeed, they were forewarned, and had time to avoid their fate; but he of Cracow said,—"Mon parti est pris; si on m'attache à la queue d'un cheval, et qu'on me traine en Sibérie, j'en serai content, étant satisfait en moi-même que je ne fais que mon devoir et ce que mon devoir et ma conscience m'exigent de faire." This bishop, not contented with speaking against the Russian measures, sent circular letters to all the Dietines, which, as senator, he had a right to do, in which he set forth to them the danger of their situation, the oppression they must expect, and exhorted them to maintain, like men, their religion and laws.

During the diet of election, the town of Warsaw being invested by the Russian troops, the Court of France thought it beneath her dignity that her Ambassador should continue, and sent word to him to represent to the Primate, that as properly now the Republic was not in her own power, and that as he had his credentials to her, and not to Russia, he had received orders from his Court to retire till things wore a new face. The Primate had been advertised that this would happen, and had, as it was imagined that the Marquis de Paumy would deliver it in an insolent manner, been told as he was too weak a man to do anything of himself, that he should likewise receive it in a high tone. Paumy, however, expressed himself as decently as possible; but the Primate not perceiving, or not expecting it, made the answer he had prepared: "Si vous ne reconnaissez pas la Republique ici, vous n'avez qu'a la chercher ailleurs."— The Ambassador was astonished at this reply, and the Palatine of Russia, who was by, and saw the absurdity of it, and was willing to give the Primate an opportunity of repairing it, said, "J'espère quand le Roi de France sera mieux in-

formé, il changera sa façon de penser." The other, however, still continued on the same tone : " Si vous ne reconnaissez pas la République ici, cherchez la ailleurs." The Marquis was nettled to the quick at this repeated ill-behaviour, and said, " Oui, le Roi mon maître est très bien informé de tout ce qui se passe ici, et il sait entre les mains de qui est la République."

The Primate still continued—" Si vous ne la reconnaissez pas, nous ne vous reconnoissons pas non plus pour Ambassadeur : Vous et tous les Ministres de France n'ont qu'à partir ;" and added, " Adieu, Mons. le Marquis." The other returned, at the same time going out, " Adieu, *Monsieur l'Archevêque*," and retired without having the honours of an ambassador paid him. This singular scene occasioned a strong letter from the Court of France, and the Primate was necessitated to send to Versailles a minister with a letter of apology.

Prince Repnin, the Russian Ambassador, plays a much greater part at Warsaw than the King. It fell in my way to be almost every day in his company ; and the tone he takes is so high towards the men of the first distinction, and of such an overbearing gallantry towards the women, that it is quite shocking. In the delegation he orders with the most despotic sway, and immediately silences any one that presumes to speak against his will, by saying, that such is not the pleasure of the Empress; she will have it otherwise. He treats all in the same cavalier manner—even the King. I was the unfortunate go-between to them at a masquerade at Prince Radzivil's, concerning dancing. His Majesty had a mind to stay till the room wherein we had supped was cleared, &c., it being larger, before he began the dance. Prince Repnin was more impatient, and was for immediately beginning

in another. The King desired me, on my telling him that the dance was going to begin, to say to Repnin that he chose to wait till a larger apartment was prepared. Repnin told me by way of answer to say to the King, "Cela ne se peut pas, et s'il ne vient pas, nous commencerons sans lui." The consequence of which was, his Majesty quietly coming to dance.

Nothing proves the vicissitude of things more than to see the Pope's nuncio wait an hour and a half in the Russian Ambassador's antechamber, and that merely to compliment him on the Empress's birth-day. This actually happened Dec. 5th, 1767.

Exclusive of this sort of authoritative way, the Prince Repnin is a worthy man, very feeling and humane, great natural parts, and very agreeable. The power that of a sudden fell into his hands was capable of turning the head of a much greater man. He has, in all these transactions, behaved with great disinterestedness, and has even avoided many occasions of enriching himself.

Could he but form his manner to the same pitch of gentleness with which he uses his power, he would gain much more applause; but he never tries to persuade, but always orders. He is personally attached to the King, and, in a manner, saved him from falling.

His Majesty was so embarrassed and vexed with the situation he saw himself brought to—partly by the ill-timed zeal, and partly by the boundless ambition and restless disposition of his subjects—that had he not been firmly buoyed up by Repnin and others, he would have abdicated. For my own part, I cannot help thinking this would have been a step that would have eternalized his name.

Instances of the omnipotence of the Russian Ambassador offer themselves every day. At the Primate's it

was a question of some of the ancient Polish monarchs, who, being driven from their own kingdom, were obliged, by way of support, to exercise some trade,—one particularly, who, for a while, was a goldsmith at Florence. The present King, discoursing on this topic said, "He should be extremely embarrassed if he was to be put to the trial, as he knew no way of getting his livelihood. "Pardonnez, Sire," said the Ambassador, "Votre Majesté sait toujours très bien danser." What should we think if we heard an ambassador tell our King, "If all trades fail, your Majesty may turn dancing-master"? This I heard at the dinner. Speaking one day to the King concerning the great and good actions he had done to his country, the order he had established amongst the troops, the Military Academy he had raised, &c., he answered, "Vous envisagez les choses dans un autre point de vue que moi, aucun bien n'arrivera de toutes les ameliorations que j'ai voulu faire à ce pays-ci. Au contraire à mesure que nous nous avançons nous serons plus opprimés. Je regarde le corps des cadets, &c., comme autant d'avantages pour notre puissante voisine. La seule consolation qui nous reste est d'ignorer nos malheurs. Quant à moi malhuereusement je ne sens que trop les épines avec lesquelles ma couronne est semée. Je l'aurais déjà envoyée à tous les cinquante mille diables si je n'avais pas honte d'abandonner mon poste. Croyez moi, ne courez jamais après les grands emplois ; il n'en résulte que des amertumes. Quand ils viennent inattendus et non cherchés, acceptez les. Si j'avais suivi cette maxime j'aurais mieux fait. Mon ambition m'entraina —j'osai pretendre à une couronne, j'ai reussi, et je suis malheureux." At other times, in English, he has said to me, "I am punished for doing what I ought to do—had they let me alone I would have made my people happy, I should never have oppressed them ; I myself have been a

private man, and know the value of liberty and the weight of oppression. I have all the disadvantages, and none of the prerogatives of a King.

SATURDAY, Feb. 28th. 1768.—The Diet, after having twice before assembled, and having each time been postponed, met to-day, for the first time, to hear the Resolutions read, which the delegation had come to.—I went down towards eleven to the château, the coup d'œil striking,—the King under a canopy at the upper end, and attended by his officers. On his right hand—the first of the Senators—sits the Primate, with his cross-bearer and other attendants, and he indeed appears a second king. Opposite him is the Archbishop of Leopold, and after them, in the first row, the other senators. These fill this foremost bench, and behind them are the other members, or nonces as they are called.

Before they began reading the papers some few attempted to speak, but it was not allowed; the attempt was afterwards repeated, but in vain; and, in short, the whole body very patiently heard the affair of the dissidents read over without a murmur. There was a nonce of Polish Prussia, who declared he would enter a protest against all the resolutions come into concerning the dissidents. He, however, was re-advised, and absented himself during the rest of the Diet.

The idea of a whole nation thus represented is awful —but how much was my respect diminished when I saw in the same room with myself, which had a window that looked into the hall, the Russian Ambassador attended by four or five generals who watched all that passed, and seemed, by putting out their heads every now and then, to menace any that presumed to oppose!

The other days of the Diet passed over all like the first—almost each day some faint struggle made to speak,

but no speech ever made. The Nonces were told, "let all be read; and then, if you please, give your sentiments," the Diet shall last a day longer on purpose. When, however, this day came, messages were sent at six o'clock in the morning to each member with a hint, that it would be better to say nothing; and accordingly when they assembled, the marshal in a few words expressed the approbation of the measures the delegation had come to, and immediately dissolved the Diet, after which the whole house, attended by the King and Senators went to the church and sung the *Te Deum*. Thus ended this most remarkable affair, and a whole nation were so singularly circumstanced, as to be under a necessity of acquiescing in making new laws totally opposite to their ideas; and the King, with the most upright and righteous intentions, was obliged to choose the party of the Russians, as the least of two evils; for, had he embraced the other, the consequences would have been a most bloody and cruel civil war.

The changes made during this Diet, consist in many articles that re-establish the decision by unanimity, which as I have before said, was broken through in the two essential points of the Military and Finance. Now, the imposts, augmentation of troops, all kinds of treaties, even those of commerce—the making war and peace—are no longer left to the determination by plurality, but submitted for ever to that of unanimity. The few economical articles that are left to be decided by the majority, are so trifling and so embarrassed with form, that from this power no plan anyways advantageous to the country can ever be effectuated. Indeed, the great point that Russia wanted to gain, was to make the government as confused as possible, or rather unmake it as a government. So we find by these new regulations such

a quantity of ceremony introduced in the Dietines, such an impossibility almost of proving the legality of the voters, that the elections cannot fail of producing infinite disorders; and the members chosen will always be those whose interest is founded on tumult and violence, and not on their own real credit in the Palatinate. The laws again relative to the finances are so framed, that every penny raised, is appropriated, by which means no surplus can be laid by to make the crown at any time formidable to its neighbours. The power, too, of the commissioners of War, and of the Treasury, is cruelly curtailed by making every Nonce incapable of being a commissioner, and *vice versâ*. Besides these most essential points, many passages in the acts of this last Diet strongly recommend the necessity of confederations as the only remedy against the abuse of unanimity; and by this means is planted a root of perpetual disorder, for what in Poland is called a Confederation, in all other governments would pass for a Rebellion. The Polish laws authorize any number of malcontents to assemble, set forth their grievances, be they what they will, even the intention of deposing the King, and his Majesty is obliged to convoke a Diet to take them into consideration; and, in these diets, called Diets of Confederation, all things are decided by plurality. Thus is Poland reduced to a mere cypher, the restoring the *liberum veto* seems to carry with it the air of liberty, and serves to flatter the old Poles; but when we examine it, we find it a mere tub to amuse the whale, for they are so entangled by other innovations, that it can never serve but to make confusion. The Court of Russia has taken care to assure the imbecility of that of Poland; and, indeed, it could not well do more, as France, Austria, Prussia, and even the Turks, each from different mo-

tives, declared, Do what you will with Poland, provided you do not introduce a new form of government, and that you quit the country when your work is done. We will have no new political being in Europe that will oblige us to make new combinations or fresh systems.

The knowledge of this, joined to the perversity and restless jealousy of the nation itself, which, had it been let alone, would have done worse things by oversetting the most salutary steps the King had taken, such as establishing a mint, composing a military school, &c.; this, I say, augmented still farther by the Russians being not only masters of the whole kingdom, but even the metropolis itself, induced his Majesty to enter into the views of the Empress, as the only power capable of defending him from foreign insults, and at the same time to curb the mutinous and unquiet disposition of his own people.

Besides those considerable changes I have mentioned in the last pages, many others of an inferior sort have taken place—such as the disposition of several places formerly belonging to the King, which are now perpetuated in private families. The disposal of near five hundred thousand pounds a-year in gratuities, amongst which is an augmentation of fifty thousand pounds per annum to the King's civil list; a hundred and odd thousand pounds to Prince Radzivil, by way of recompense for what his lands suffered during his exile; several titles given away; near a hundred new "indigenats," or bills of naturalization passed; and the great affair of the dissidents, which I did not mention, because I looked on it as a thing taken for granted. They are now put on an equal footing with the Catholics, with this single exception, that a dissident cannot be elected King, and that though his Polish Majesty may marry a Protestant, yet such a Queen cannot be crowned. They are no longer dissidents, but

Gens de l'Eglise non-unis—which word, non-unis, they prefer to *désunis*, as that implies their having been once united, which they will not allow.

Prince Radzivil, the Marshal of the Confederation whilst it existed, was one of the most powerful Princes in Poland. His revenues, were they in order, amount to eighteen millions of Polish florins, equal to near five hundred thousand pounds sterling, but much diminished during the interregnum by the devastations the Russian troops made on his estates. He was at that time declared enemy of Russia, and had an army of 8,000 men, with which he opposed all her measures; the consequence of which was, his being routed and obliged to seek protection at Dresden, during which exile his immense possessions were a prey to the enemy. On the new tumults he changed his party, and became "l'âme damnée" of the Empress, was put by her at the head of the Confederation, and was rewarded at the end by the first Palatinate in the kingdom, and a present, as I said before, of upwards of one hundred thousand pounds. He is about thirty-five years old, goes always dressed in the old Polish habit, and is so great a sot, that Prince Repnin quartered a colonel and sixty men in his hotel, to prevent him from drinking during the time he held such considerable posts. I saw him myself the very day after the Diet was dissolved, and the soldiers retired from his palace, come quite drunk into Repnin's, and bluster that now he had a right so to do. He talks no French, and in his morals and behaviour little exceeds his own vassals. He gave a masquerade on the Empress of Russia's birthday to near three thousand masks, and they calculated, that besides other wines, there was drunk a thousand bottles of champagne. The profuse prodigality of all Polish feasts is beyond comprehension. This Prince every day keeps

an open house to so many people, that his five-and twenty cooks could scarce supply them. The two brothers Czartoriski likewise have public dinners and suppers every day to as many as please to come, and these two houses are the great resort of strangers; that of Prince Radzivil is quite a Polish one.

Their great article of luxury is Hungary wine, which they have in the greatest perfection, but pay an immense price—that drunk in common amounts to two or three ducats a bottle, and there is to be found that is worth eight or nine; champagne is drunk as cider, and the red wines are in little vogue. Their tables are greatly served in the French style, and are not, to those of the country, a very great expense, as they have all their provisions from their farms, and each house may be looked on as a town, as there are in it all sorts of artificers, and a great "Seigneur" never need send out of his own walls for anything.

Prince Czartoriski's *personal* attendants and servants amount to three hundred and seventy-five. The number in his country-house is infinitely greater, besides his troops, which consist of three or four thousand men.

Copy of a letter I brought from the King of Poland to Mr. Charles Yorke, directed à Mr. Yorke, ci-devant Avocat General.

Mon cher Charles Yorke—Vous serez toujours Charles Yorke, tel titre que vous preniez, ou que vous résigniez; et c'est le nom que j'aimerois toujours le plus à vous donner parcequ'il convient le mieux à la sincère et intime amitié dans laquelle nous avons vécu, et dont le sentiment durera autant que moi-même. Comme j'écris plus amplement à votre frère l'Ambassadeur, et que je compte dire aux deux frères ce que je dis à l'un (en vertu

de cette union digne des temps Patriarchals que j'ai tant admirée dans votre famille) je ne repète pas ici sur Harris que j'ai été charmé de connaître et d'acceuillir avec distinction, ni sur ma situation présente qui redevient très critique. Tout ce que je vous dirai c'est, que si jamais on vous offrait la Couronne de la Pologne, je ne vous conseille pas de l'accepter, pour peu que vous aimiez votre repos. Puissiez vous, mon cher, et digne ami jouir bien à votre aise de cet *otium cum dignitate* pour lequel vous êtes à tous egards si bien qualifié—et dont les douceurs apparemment ne deviendront jamais mon partage. Puissais-je pour soulagement dans ma pénible carrière avoir au moins encore une fois le plaisir de vous embrasser. "J'ajoute cette prière à celle que je fais tous les jours; Seigneur, donnez de la sagesse, du courage, et de la patience, à mesure que vous me donnez de la peine." Adieu, mon ami, pour cette fois.

S. A. R.

Varsovie, 20 Mars, 1768.

Copy of a letter I brought at the same time from the King of Poland to Sir Jos. Yorke, Ambassador to the States-General.

Varsovie, le 20 Mars, 1768.

MONSIEUR LE CHEVALIER D'YORKE.—Monsieur de Harris ne retournera pas auprès de vous sans vous porter mes remercimens de me l'avoir fait connaître, d'autant plus que je crois avoir acquis des droits à sa bonne volonté pour moi. J'ai été charmé de pouvoir dans sa personne distinguer et caresser un ami de Messieurs d' Yorke. C'est un titre qui honorera toujours chez moi quiconque méritera de le porter. C'est de quoi vous pouvez être aussi assuré que de l'ineffaçable reconnaissance que je

porterai toute ma vie à l'affectueuse et cordiale amitié que j'ai éprouvée de votre part lorsque vous autres ont un peu gouverné ma jeunesse. J'ai tâché de m'acquitter en partie de cette espèce d'obligation que je vous ai ; envers Harris, de manière je me. flatte à ne pas révolter le pupil contre le tuteur.

Si la curiosité et l'envie de s'instruire ont conduits Harris ici, la première a certainement été très mal satisfaite, et la seconde ne lui a appris qu'à voir à quel point la légèreté, et l'ignorance peuvent rendre une nation absurde dans sa conduite, et à quel dégré les gens les plus sensés, et les meilleurs citoyens sont obligés quelquefois de se preter au mal pour éviter le pire. A peine avons nous tant bien que mal, achevés une longue et triste pièce qu'en voila une seconde qui commence (referring to the New Confederacy), et dont il est impossible de prévoir la fin, parcequ'on ne connaît pas encore quels ressorts font jouer cette nouvelle machine. Tout cela n'empêche pas que je ne dise toujours, ' Courage et Patience.' Le sort se lassera à la fin de se jouer de moi, et Dieu qui ne fait rien en vain ne m'a pas fait Roi d'une façon si peu ordinaire—et ne m'a pas donné cet opiniâtre désir de faire le bien de ma nation, pour que tout cela soit perdu pour elle. Peutêtre cette nation doit elle apprendre à vaincre les préjugés par les malheurs même qu'elle s'attire plus vite que mes sermons n'auraient fait dans une suite de temps plus paisibles. Peutêtre aussi dois-je devenir la victime de sa folie à fin qu'un grand exemple et une grande révolution servent à ceux qui viendront après moi. Eh bien! si justment je me trouve être ce malheureux chaînon de la grande chaîne des évènemens sur lequel est écrit sacrifice, il faudra bien que je remplisse ma triste destinée. En tous cas j'irai seul, mais avec la conscience nette d'un patriote intègre devant le Grand Juge, et je laisserai ici

du moins quelques uns témoins de mes plus secrettes pensées qui j'espère ne rougiront pas de s'appeller mes amis quand même je n'y serai plus. —— Mon cher Ambassadeur, je ne sais si j'écris une lettre, ou un testament, mais c'est mon cœur qui parle à quelqu'un qu'il chérit autant que mon esprit l'estime.

STANISLAS AUGUSTE, Roi.

Compare these two letters with his speech to me, and see how completely miserable this great and good man must be.

Prince Repnin, though of the Greek Church, which, in forms and ceremonies equals the Roman Catholic, and in abstinence, during the Passion week, exceeds it, yet had so little respect to this or any religion, that he ordered a play to be acted at Warsaw on Ash Wednesday. At this play no one was present, but the Prince, his suite, and the Princess Czartoriska.

I have frequently known the players delay beginning the play, because this great Ambassador was not arrived, even when his Majesty has been waiting in his box near an hour.

Towards Christmas 1767, I was at a hunting match at General Makronosky's, at which his Majesty, the Russian Ambassador, and many more of the great, assisted. The hospitality of the house we were in, the rude season of the year, mitigated by good fires and good cheer, created so much good humour, that Kings forgot their royalty, and Ambassadors their power. Mirth prevailed in the strongest degree, and I could not help observing to his Majesty, that I had scarce ever seen him in such spirits before. *Ah! dit-il, il est bien doux de se tromper quelquefois.*

It is remarkable that this King, who possesses in himself almost every virtue, both as king and individual, and is endowed with an uncommmon share of sense, philosophy, and humanity, should have chosen for his favourite and Prime Minister one who is totally void of either; for such is Braniski,* who, if he has any merit, it is that of a ferocious courage. His demerits are drinking, quarrelling, empty talking, and wrong-headedness. His Majesty's partiality to his own brothers may be, from their consanguinity, pardoned; one may venture, however, to say, that had he none, he would be better advised, and that if he only heard their advice without following it, would lay himself open to much less censure.

At the conclusion of the Diet of 1767–8, which I have mentioned, with its singular decrees, things seemed to promise at least some years of tranquillity; and this tranquillity was so apparent that the Russian Ambassador received compliments on the occasion, and he told me himself that he should immediately order the troops to march out of the country, and that by the next free Diet, to be held in November 1768, there would not be more than two thousand Russians left in it. Yet it had scarce been finished a week, when news was brought to Warsaw of a confederation being formed at Bar in Podolia, headed by one Krasynski, brother to the Bishop of Kaminick, and soon after of a second, headed by a Potocki.

As I left the country at this time (viz. March 20, 1768) I could have no opportunity of making any remarks myself on this formidable insurrection, but may fairly sup-

* This Braniski, or Branicki, is not a real Braniski. He married, in 1782, Alexandrina Engelhardt, eldest niece to Prince Potemkin. He and she are now (1804) alive at Biclesiska, in Red Russia, with six or seven children, and in the enjoyment of a fortune of 70,000*l.* sterling, a-year. When I first knew him he had nothing. I was at his marriage, and he was then precisely what I describe him here.—[*Original Note, Oct.* 1804.]

pose that it was occasioned by a fanatic zeal on the side of the lower class, and by a tædium of oppression and dread of slavery, mixed with their natural turbulent spirit, in that of those of a superior rank. Their cry was religion and liberty, their standard a bloody cross, and they began their opposition to Russia and its measures by seizing some officers Repnin sent to desire them to disperse, and by persecuting, more than before, the unfortunate dissidents, one of whom, who unluckily fell in their way, they tortured, and, at last, crucified. At first everything fell before them, but their triumph did not last long. When I quitted the country, they were about to lay siege to Kaminick, and the Russian troops, who had just before actually received orders for returning home, were now counter-ordered, and an express sent to Petersburg for orders what to do.

Prince Czartoriski, great Chancellor of Lithuania, and eldest uncle to the King, was destined by the Empress to be crushed; and she had, through her ambassador, signified to him, that if he did not lay down his charge, and retire *à ses terres*, he should be tried, condemned, and executed. His answer was, "Je n'ai pas reçu mon emploi de sa Majesté Impériale, ainsi elle me pardonnera si je ne veux pas m'en défaire à sa requête. Je suis vieux, très vieux, et elle me fera très peu de mal en m'otant le peu de jours qui me restent. Mais j'ai trop de soin de ma gloire, pour ternir la veille d'une vie qui j'ose le dire, a été passée sans tache, au service de ma patrie, par un acte, que le monde avec raison condamnera comme lâche et intéressé." In consequence of this manly answer, the ambassador told him he must prepare for his destiny; that at the approaching Diet his trial would come on, and that he might easily foresee his fate.

That, however, from his great rank and known honesty, he would not seize his person till that time, and that he advised him in the interim, to settle all he could to the advantage of his family. During this interim, I dined with him more than once, and it was a pleasing sight to behold with what fortitude and magnanimity he bore his fate. Sitting at the head of a long table, surrounded by his family and friends, and doing its honours with the same cheerfulness and cordiality as if nothing had befallen him, addressing himself to each of his guests with the greatest ease and good humour, inquiring of the strangers the difference of the manners, customs, &c., of their respective countries, and of his countrymen, little interesting facts relative to his own. Never absent, nor buried in thought, and still doing, as a chancellor, his business with the same exactitude as before. All this I say, would at any time have been striking in a man near fourscore; but when one adds, that this old man when he did so, was in a manner under condemnation, it makes the circumstance still more to be admired. The King's great humanity saved him: for, though Czartoriski had opposed him strongly, yet on this occasion, his Majesty interested himself so warmly for him, and made such a point of getting his pardon, that the Empress at last granted it him.

SPAIN

IN 1768, 1769, AND 1770.

In 1768 Mr. Harris was appointed secretary of legation under Sir James Gray, our minister at the Court of Madrid, and gives the following account of his journey to Spain, and of the Spaniards.

I have inserted it principally to show how little the people and country have altered in character during the last seventy-six years, rich as these have been in events and revolutions.

After having been detained a week longer at Paris than I originally intended, I left it, with very little regret, the 31st of December, at noon, 1768, and began a journey that, from the badness of the accommodations, and rigid season of the year, promised nothing amusing or pleasant. I, however, found that all those who had given me intelligence about it, had greatly magnified the difficulties, and that, in fact, most of those that were represented to me as such, on my approaching them, in a manner vanished, which served to confirm a remark that I had made before, that either people's memories greatly fail them when they are describing their travels, or that they imagine they add to their own importance by augmenting the dangers and hardships they have gone through; since I never found any country, either Holland, France, Germany, or Poland, answer the account I had received before I travelled through them.

The road from Paris to Bayonne is one so well-known, and so much frequented, that there can be nothing new said about it, and as no incidents happened to me between these two places worth recording, I shall not dwell long on that part of my journey.

Except Bourdeaux, none of the towns that one passes through merit much notice. The situation of Barbezieux also is pleasant, but none is equal to that of Bourdeaux. You approach it from the opposite side of the Garonne, which is broader than the Thames, and, after having passed through a disagreeable country, come at once on a noble bend of this fine river, which is covered with shipping, and has its banks on the other side formed by a quay, near three miles in length, adorned with numberless fine buildings, and magnificent edifices, as well public as private. On your right and left you have a view of the country, which is uneven, and consists of hills, covered with woods and vines. The interior of the town, though not to be compared with the outside, has, however, several fine streets and squares, particularly that of Louis XV, where is his equestrian statue in bronze. Those faubourgs that are called the Chartrons, are by far the finest buildings; they are inhabited chiefly by the considerable merchants; and from the fine quay I have just mentioned these faubourgs are joined to the town by a planted walk, called Allée Tourni. Between the two stands the Château Trompette, a fortification erected by Louis the Fourteenth, as he said, to *defend* the town, though from its situation it seems placed merely to *command* it.

Bayonne has nothing very remarkable in it; it is a neat town, situated near the sea, and the approach to it is romantic. I cannot, however, say so much of the generality of the road from Paris; that part of it between

Blois and Tours, indeed, is very fine; it is carried on a causeway thirty miles in length, on the side of the Loire, which is a broad, rapid, clear stream, with a bold shore on the opposite side, covered sometimes with woods, sometimes in arable or vines, and everywhere interspersed with towns, castles, and country houses. As you get nearer Tours, you come close under some rocks, which are covered with vines, and in which the peasants have dug their houses, where they live like so many rabbits, and you would see no vestiges of inhabitants, if it were not for the holes they have made above to let out the smoke.

From Bourdeaux to Bayonne is one continued heath, and it is a perfect resemblance of Brandenbourg; no trees, except some black forests of firs, and no trace of tillage or pastures. The villages are like those in Poland, and the roads one continual bed of sand. At fifteen posts from Bayonne you discover the Pyreneans, which run on the left as far as your eye can carry you, and on the right end in the sea, of which, as you approach Bayonne, you get also a sight.

Beyond Bayonne, both the people and language are completely changed. This is called le Pays des Basques, and they have a language peculiar to themselves. I travelled through this country on a mule, and had my chaise drawn by six others, which were destined to carry me to Madrid. At Bayonne there is an end of the good regulations of the post, and post roads. From this place to St. Jean pied du Port, a small town at the foot of the Pyreneans, is a distance of about twenty four miles, the whole consisting of uneven ground, which grows more rugged and steep, till it ends in those formidable mountains. Nothing, however, can be imagined more romantic; from the heights you have the most beautiful pros-

pects, the whole country of Basque, with a great extent of sea, which here forms a noble bay, and mountains all around, some woody, others barren, and some whose snowy tops are hid in the clouds. In every valley you are sure to find a limpid brook, labourers everywhere at work, and fine rich meadows. The contrast is made more striking by the perpendicular brown hills that rise all about you, and confine the view to a very narrow space. St. Jean pied du Port, as I said before, is at the foot of the mountains, and is situated most picturesquely; it has a small fortress, and the whole is composed of not more than sixty or seventy houses. There, I made over my chaise to five yoke of oxen, and, leaving it to the care of my valet de chambre, continued my passage over the Pyrenean on my mule, accompanied by my footman and the muleteer. From the instant of my departure, to my arrival at Ronceveaux, a space of twenty miles, I found myself at the edge of a precipice, which by degrees became higher and more formidable; at the bottom there was a river white with foam breaking over the rocks, and on all sides immense mountains, now quite barren, now covered with vast groves of Spanish chesnuts, and from which broke forth springs, which formed cataracts of a prodigious height. Wherever the valley is wide enough, one finds a village inhabited by beings that appear scarcely human, and their huts seem styes; in fact, they and their swine all live together, and they are scarcely distinguishable. When you have gone about two leagues, you get to a small chapel that divides the two kingdoms, and you are then about half-way across the mountain. The remaining part, however, is more romantic; the precipices are steeper, the river louder, and the rocks higher. You sometimes seem so completely surrounded by them, that there appears no possibility of continuing

your road; you, however, always find some blind path which conducts you to scenes more formidable than those you leave. It was as I entered into one of these dark roads that the day closed, and the gloomy light which succeeded it added not a little to the horror of the scene. I was too much occupied with attending to my mule to give a loose to my imagination, as I knew a false step would infallibly break my neck, the probability of which became every minute greater, since the night brought with it an immense fall of snow and rain, which made it so dark as to leave me no other means of following my guide than by his voice, as I could not see even to the head of my mule. I confess, being in this situation, on a path nowhere more than three feet broad, and which bordered on a precipice of a thousand deep, was by no means comfortable, and I found myself very happy when we arrived at a horrid inn at Ronceveaux, or Roncesvalles, wet, tired, cold, and hungry. I was obliged to wait at this hovel the greatest part of the next day for the coming up of my chaise, which, from the badness of the weather, was detained a long time on the mountains. It, however, at length arrived, and I continued my journey through roads good as compared with those I had just passed.

Pampeluna is the first town of any consequence I came to; its situation is pleasant, and it would not in itself be disagreeable, were it not so uncommonly dirty. It is the capital of Navarre, and situated about as far on the other side the Pyreneans as Bayonne is on this. The country, however, is not so pleasant, nor the road so good, as in France. The whole road from Pampeluna to Madrid has not the least variety—a large, open, barren country, which, except now and then a few olive trees, evergreens, oaks, and cork trees, affords little ver-

dure. The prospects, though often extensive, are dull, and every hill you mount serves only to show a new scene of plain and sterility. Except now and then in the valleys, your eye meets no pleasing object. Some Moorish towns and castles which you pass through, or see on the neighbouring hills, may be looked on as curiosities. In themselves the villages and houses exceed in dirt and nastiness anything I had conceived. In the inn you find nothing, save chocolate, and the beds no one would attempt to lie in. It is absolutely necessary to carry everything with you; and as you come to a town, buy your provisions, and get them dressed by your own people. The necessity of travelling slowly, makes these inconveniences felt much more heavily than in countries equally ill-furnished with inns, but where, on account of the post, you may always proceed. Here, after travelling for ten hours at a foot's pace, you find yourself in one of these miserable barns, where you are to pass at least as many hours more, and advanced only four or five leagues on your journey. Patience, books, and pen and ink, are the most useful companions for Spanish travelling. I performed the greatest part of this journey on horseback; it serves to change the motion, and gave me an opportunity of smelling the rosemary and other sweet herbs with which many of the heaths are covered. These herbs afford fuel, and I found nothing else to burn in all the inns where there were chimneys, which was, however, very seldom; their common way of warming being with a braziero, which I believe not a little contributes to the sallow unwholesome look of all the lower kind of people. Their indolence and dirt, however, must also in some measure be the cause. I did not observe a dozen men either at plough or any other kind of labour on the whole road. I often la-

mented their discordant guitars, particularly the night of Christmas, during which they did not cease a moment playing on them, and accompanying them with cantiques and carols. The road might be made very decent. All that part of it which lies in Navarre is, in fact, so; the rest, through the two Castilles, was never touched by the pick-axe or spade. The plains, being hard, are practicable enough; but the hills, being of loose stones and with very large gutters worn by the rains, are always disagreeable, and sometimes dangerous. The breaking of the drag-chain as I was coming down one of the steepest of them, was the cause of our being on the point of rolling down a precipice of a very considerable height, and which most infallibly would have demolished us. Though from Pampeluna to Madrid is no farther than sixty leagues, yet it requires ten days to perform it. At about two days' journey you pass the Ebro, which is an unequal river, sometimes very broad, but was when I crossed it just the contrary. The country round it is, as they tell me, for eight months in the year in a continual fog (it was so at this time), which occasions fevers and other epidemical distempers to the inhabitants; and, as they pretend, a falling of the hair.

Were it cultivated, I am apt to think it would not only be wholesome but also very lucrative, as the soil hereabouts appears excellent. One passes through very few places of note: Agreda, Valhena, and Taffalla, are all diminutive towns. The first is at the foot of a ridge of mountains that divide Castille from Arragon, the highest of which is called Monteajo, and is visible for many days together. Round about this place are a great number of sheep, and their wool makes the richest article of the country. It is black, and of an excellent sort. Alcala is a considerable town and university, at about four

leagues distance from Madrid. The evening was serene, and the concourse of people dressed in their cloaks and mantillas I met with as I approached the town, was one of the most pleasing objects on the whole road, as a mile or two on the banks of the Henares, that one passes at not a great distance, is the most agreeable. From Alcala to Madrid is but a short operation; I got there by eleven o'clock on the morning of 28th of December, and after having attempted an inn little better than those I met with on the road, I accepted the kind invitation of our Consul, of an apartment in his house till such time as I could get my own furnished.

I was six-and-twenty days performing this journey, a distance of about eleven or twelve hundred English miles, and save one day at Bourdeaux, and another at Bayonne, I lost no time. To those who are in health, I should advise strongly the travelling on horseback the Spanish part of it, as there is a post well regulated, and it saves great trouble, time, and expense.

1769.

The different residences of the court are Madrid, Aranjuez, San Ildefonso or La Granja, the Escurial, and the Pardo.

Madrid is not extensive, and very disagreeably situated, in the midst of an immense tract of barren land, and on very uneven ground. The very sharp and penetrating winds which come from a ridge of mountains at about eight leagues distance on the north, make it in the winter extremely cold; and the want of shade and moisture causes the summer heats to be intolerable. It has several fine streets, but very few fine public buildings. The post-office, built by Marques de Grimaldi's

direction, is in bad taste, and of the worst French architecture. The custom-house, now building by Sabatini, is a good performance, and, were he not confined in space, his great talents and abilities would make it a masterpiece. The palace is an enormous pile, and, standing on the brow of a hill, appears most magnificently on the north-east side of the town. I will not pretend to dispute the justness of its architecture; I believe it is very false, but on the whole, as well for its external appearance as for its apartments, it is one of the noblest palaces I ever beheld. It has a vast subterranean range, which serves for all kinds of offices. It is quadrangular, and all the royal family are lodged in it, as well as many of the great officers of state, the secretary's office, council chamber, &c. Great projects are in agitation about making a garden suitable to it; there is at present none. Great pains, and immense sums, are expended in making the access to it less steep. Sabatini is attempting to raise an enormous mass of earth, on which there is to be a road; nearly sixty thousand pounds are already consumed in this vast undertaking.

Conde d'Aranda has likewise greatly beautified the town within these few years, by lighting it with lamps, and paving the streets. These improvements, though apparently advantageous to its inhabitants, were one of the causes of their rising in March 1766. The Calle Alcala, the most considerable street, appears nobly as you enter the town by the gate of that name. A million of rials, or ten thousand pounds sterling, are to be employed towards making this a magnificent gateway, and Sabatini has given in some very elegant designs.

The public walk is the Prado, now making under the direction of Conde d'Aranda; it is a large broad tract, which separates the town from the Buen Retiro.

The garden of this palace is very extensive, and in part pleasantly laid out by Mr. Ward, and the delicias, two regular walks of trees planted by Monsieur d'Enfenada out of the Puerta d'Alocha, are among the most shady walks near Madrid. The amusements of this town (I mean the public ones) are, the bull-feast, two playhouses, and, during the carnival, masquerades. The bull-feast is peculiar to the nation, and was formerly matter of occupation to those of the best rank, who then were actors, but are in these silken days become spectators. The number and time was then, too, unlimited, but the present humane monarch only allows twelve each year, and allots from the month of May till that of September for their exhibition. However degenerated they may be from those of ancient days, yet they still afford wonderful instances of courage and dexterity in the men, and of ferocity and strength in the bulls. As all those who have been in this country, and many who never were, have described this spectacle, I will not dwell on it longer than to say, that though it is interesting, and well worth seeing, yet the impressions it leaves on the mind are not agreeable, and if it renders a man intrepid, it also makes him inhuman.

Their playhouses are, by the inspection of Conde d'Aranda, within these few years become tolerable, with good decorations, and decent actors. Their piece is generally of three acts; between the first and second there is always a kind of farce, and between the second and third they sing their torradillas and seguidillas, a species of music peculiar to the nation, not harmonious in itself, but when sung by a Spanish woman, and with proper gesticulation, very far from disagreeable. Their two theatres are, one in the Calle Principe, called el Corral del Principe; the other in Calle de la Cruz, called el

Corral de la Cruz. The masquerade is entirely a work of Conde d'Aranda, and is one of the best conducted in Europe; it is twice a week during the carnival, in a large room built on purpose in the Calle de Peral, and till the last year, 1770, was very much frequented. Priests and confessors have, however, alienated the minds of the weak and vulgar from coming to it. The money gained at it is dedicated to the completing the Prado, which, when finished, will be a great additional beauty to the town. On a fine holiday afternoon this is one of the gayest sights imaginable; all the bourgeoisie, and people of an inferior class, are there, and the women have so much art in the conduct of their mantilla, that they appear always pretty; they hide their bad features, and take care to show advantageously their good ones. During the forty days of Lent the playhouses are shut, but in their stead are substituted puppet-shows, tumblers, and rope-dancers. I never could learn why these latter were considered as a more proper diversion for Lent than plays, nor why it was imagined they left less dissipated impressions on the mind. Such, however, is the idea, and the people frequent them with the greatest avidity.

The Holy Week is, as in all Roman Catholic countries, a second carnival. Those of the Court, and of the better sort, dress themselves in black velvet, with flame-coloured waistcoats, and sleeves trimmed with gold. The ladies also are clothed in the same manner. The bourgeoisie, supposed to be occupied in acts of devotion, leave their shops and work, and pass the whole week in the streets. The processions celebrating the mysteries of the Passion, draw the whole town of Madrid together. His Majesty this week, on Holy Thursday, visits seven churches, and washes the feet of twelve poor men, whom afterwards he serves at dinner. From Friday till Sunday, (the three

days Christ was in the tomb,) no coaches are suffered to be used; the grandee-men go on horseback, and the grandee-women in sedan chairs. The parade both of the one and the other does not carry with it an air of humiliation. They are generally attended, the one by led horses, ecuyers, grooms, etc.; the other by numberless pages and footmen.

Saturday at noon, (the moment they suppose of the Resurrection,) the bells ring, the people halloo, coaches are again permitted, and three days of profound silence are followed by a great clamour.

Few churches, except those of St. Anthony of Padua, in the Calle Portuguesa, and that of the Imperial College, formerly belonging to the Jesuits, are worth notice. The former is circular, and painted the whole by Fordan, in his best style. The other is large and well-proportioned, and has an excellent picture of Mengs over the high altar—unfortunately so high that the figures, although bigger than the life, are not distinguishable. It is remarkable in all the Spanish churches, that this high altar is generally of wood, and goes from the floor to the ceiling, richly carved and gaudily gilt. In that of St. Thomas is the tomb of Hernando Cortes and his wife, after the manner of the old tombs of those days.

The Bueno Retiro is a much pleasanter situation than the new palace, and more habitable in every respect. It is a very large dispersed pile of buildings, with no very elegant apartments, except the ball-room, which is inestimable, from being painted by Fordan. It once was full of good pictures, but few are left now, except some bad Reubens and Schneiders. The garden I already have spoken of. In it is the porcelain manufactory, for which purpose his present Majesty has built a house as large as his palace, but which never yet has produced anything else, except ornaments for a cabinet or two.

The Casa del Campo is a small country palace, on the other side of the bridge of Segovia. Its situation is rural and pleasant, with more trees and shade than in any other of the environs of Madrid.

At about three leagues distant from Madrid is situated the workhouse of St. Fernando, founded by the late King Ferdinand. It is both a workhouse for the laborious poor, as it has several manufactures, and a place to confine those of dissolute life. Pins, stockings, lace, &c. are made here. It is divided into many wards, and contains seven hundred women, and as many men. Near it, on the banks of the Garrama, is a nursery for trees, which are brought to Madrid and the neighbourhood.

The King's Library at Madrid is an exceeding large building, consisting of many galleries, filled, as they say, with good books. M. Casiri, principal librarian, is a man of erudition, and has published a very learned catalogue of Arabian MSS. in the Escurial Library.

ARANJUEZ IN 1770.

ARANJUEZ is situated seven leagues from Madrid, in an extensive valley, watered by two rivers, the Garrama and the Tagus. It would in any country be delightful, but is greatly more so where it is, since all its environs are nothing but barren sandy heaths. The palace was built by Philip the Second, and those venerable elms which compose the Calle de la Reyna, and several other fine avenues, were planted at the same time. The whole Sitio is one continued park, trees, gardens, and meadows, which have been greatly beautified by the present minister, Monsieur de Grimaldi, who has this place much at heart. The only bad quality is the unwholesomeness

of the air, occasioned by its proximity to the river, which obliges the Court to leave it towards the middle of June. In the summer it would otherwise be delightful, since in the hottest days shade is always to be found. The village itself is laid out in a peculiar manner—in squares of houses of one story only, and four in a square. Mr. Ward first began this system of building. The front of the palace is good Italian Architecture, the staircase very fine, but the apartments very indifferent. The garden immediately adjoining to it, called le Jardin de l'Isle, is very pleasant, somewhat in our taste, but full of fountains with bronze figures, amongst which are some very capital ones. The other, le Jardin du Printemps, is situated on the side of the Calle de la Reyna, and is filled with roses which embalm the air. Near this garden, on the side of the river, is the house where are those most magnificent barks which were used for parties of pleasure in the time of Queen Barbara. They are very large, and incredibly pompous. Her majesty and her suite had two, and two others were dedicated for the orchestra, &c. Around the palace are several poultry courts, or *gallineros*, which amuse the royal family; and, as they are all well and neatly built, they have a pretty effect. The Casa de las Vacas, a milk-house, was built by Grimaldi, and affords excellent butter and cream. His present Catholic Majesty, by the advice of Father Osman his confessor, has built a convent here for the Franciscan Order, which has cost a great sum, and is so unwholesomely situated, that the monks must either go away at a certain time of the year, or else risk dying. About half a league distant is the King's breed of horses, which is no great matter; and about three leagues on the side of Toledo are kept those enormous asses for the propagation of mules.

The monks of the above-mentioned convent avoid the epidemical agues of this place by drinking four bottles a-day of Mancha wine, a stronger liquor than Port. This fact was told me by Monsieur de Grimaldi, under whose inspection, as Governor, all the expenses of this Sitio immediately come.

This place, when the Court is in residence, abounds with amusements. A good Italian Opera, and lately a Spanish play after the French manner. This troop was brought up under the direction of Monsieur Olivedas at Seville; and in the Spring of 1770 Monsieur Grimaldi sent for them to Aranjuez. They perform pieces translated from the French, in the same manner of declamation, and with the same action, as on the French stage, and succeed tolerably well. Besides these theatrical entertainments, there are occasionally others; such as a race of the Florentine horses without riders (the most insipid imaginable); and in the year 1770, the Prince of Asturias exhibited before the King and his Princess, a magnificent carousal, consisting of the chief nobility divided into four parties. The one headed by himself, the others by his uncle, the Infant Don Louis, his brother the Infant Don Gabriel, and the Duke of Medina Sidonia; they were all dressed in the old Spanish habit, but of different colours. It consisted of different evolutions, which were gone through with an exactness peculiar to the Spanish horses, and a magnificent entrée, headed by kettle-drums and trumpets, and composed of the knights and chiefs of the King's stables. They repeated three times before the Court, in a spot destined for that purpose near the palace, which was surrounded with balconies, in the principal of which were the King and Foreign Ministers, and in the others, the first people of distinction in the kingdom.

There is, likewise, a bull feast at Aranjuez; the circus not so large as that of Madrid, but still of a very considerable size.

The vulgar opinion is, that the Spaniard, is indolent and proud. Strangers, in general, who come into the country, are so prepossessed with this maxim, that they never give themselves the pains to examine whether it is true or false, and whether, admitting this indolence and pride, they are not endowed with other qualities which might in some degree recompense them for the bad ones. I do not accuse the idle stranger, who suffers himself to be carried away with this opinion, with want of perception, since in fact the Spaniard does possess in the strongest degree these two vices, and they are visible in all their actions, and in every race of them. I only blame him who, after living awhile in the country, goes out of it and defames its inhabitants, by confirming this generally received idea, without remembering they are brave, honest, and generous. Nay, I would even have him say, that they owe their bad qualities to their religion and its priests, which, by keeping the lower people in a state of mendicity, and the higher in one of ignorance, deprive both the one and the other of the possibility of enlarging their minds, or extending their ideas. The most enlightened never carry them beyond the Pyreneans, and the generality confine them to their native town and its province. From want of education and erudition, they do not learn the progress other nations make, and still look on themselves, in spite of the severe lessons a succeeding century has given them, as the same great and powerful monarchy as when, under the domination of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, they gave the law to all Europe. They dislike strangers, be-

cause they are taught to believe them all Jews, and barbarians. But if a stranger take the pains to persuade them to the contrary (no difficult matter), he is generally more caressed here than among their polite neighbours. To these polite neighbours they have the greatest of all antipathies, and dignify them by the title of *gavachos*. The Germans and English are most in their graces; the Portuguese and Italians are little better loved than the French.

The most perfect Spaniard is to be found in Andalusia; here is the real majo, the true gitana; the finest horses, and most ferocious bulls. The language, too, is different, and the accent full and marked. Here the slouched hat and dark cloak still reign amongst the graver sort, and here the faja, the redecilla, and montero too, are in perfection. These three decorations, the first of which is an immense silk scarf, which is wound round the waist; the second, the redecilla, a net which covers the hair, and hangs down in a purse behind; and the third a black kind of bonnet, together with a short jacket of some lively colour, with lappels; a pair of trunk breeches, and shoes which buckle at the toes, compose the complete majo, not forgetting a silk coloured handkerchief, tied loosely round the neck. A Spaniard so dressed vies with the French *petit maitre*, the English *maccaroni*, and in short the most accomplished character of each nation. In this dress he shines in the fandango, and in this he takes his guitar to serenade his favourite maja.

The part of their character we are most deceived in is, of their being serious. I never met a nation more fond of amusements, and which pursues them with more avidity. The people, too, are gay beyond conception, and possess that rare talent of raillery, which is scarcely

known among the lower race of mankind, *viz.*, of keeping up for a long while an animated altercation with great wit and humour without being indecent or quarrelsome. In a word, that general rule necessary to us before we should presume to live abroad must be practised in this country, to conform to its manners, and customs; more difficult perhaps than elsewhere, as these manners and customs are more peculiar, but being once acquired, you reap also a more essential advantage, not only because scarcely any foreigners do it, but also because you get introduced among a set of people who are little known, and to whom no one renders justice.

Nothing is more false than the general opinion received by the world of his present Catholic Majesty Charles the Third. He is barely considered as a degree above his unfortunate son,* and is supposed to be destitute of all feelings except that of the chace, and void of every other talent, save that of pulling a trigger. He is not even allowed the ordinary capacity of subscribing to what his minister suggests, but it is imagined that business of every kind, and in every department, goes on without his knowledge, and without his pretending to know anything about it. The contrary to this, however, is most notorious; and had his Majesty been brought up with a better education than that given to the Princes of the Bourbon family, he would probably have been a more illustrious monarch, as far as regards his private accomplishments, than any of that house, since the time of Henry the Fourth. He has a most clear head, comprehends with great alacrity, and answers with unparalleled

* Elder brother to the King of Naples; and excluded by his father from the succession for imbecility.

accuracy. His heart, also, is excellent; the best of fathers and of masters, and although despotic, yet never a tyrant. No better proof can be given of this, than his being surrounded by the same servants who accompanied him to Naples, in the year 1733, and who are grown grey in his service, and find in their royal master an affectionate friend in their age, without having ever in their youth experienced a caprice or ill word from him. He has wisely chosen his ministers not from among his favourites, and at set hours he confers with them every day, and very often they find him with an opinion of his own they never can divert him from; and very often, too, he apparently accedes to them, only to arrive better at their thoughts. Such are his good qualities; his faults are, a false idea of the glory and power of his monarchy; a temper, when once irritated, irreconcileable; a blind submission to whatever happens, which, whether it is to himself or others, he calls the will of Providence; and such a determined attachment to his favourite amusement, the chace, as to make him slothful and negligent in his more important avocations. For these reasons it is easy to make him take fire, by signifying to him the overgrown ambition or insolent conduct of another state, and this warmth, when once kindled never cools. Thus, when he was taught that we were a restless overbearing nation, he suffered himself to be led into a war with us; and our successes during the course of it, instead of having their proper effect, by teaching him our strength and his inability to support it, produced the opposite effect, and his vanity received a wound which never can be healed. He palliated his misfortunes by his universal specific, Providence, and to her he imputed the loss of the Havannah, of the Manilla, the ill-conducted campaign in Portugal, and even the

insurrection at Madrid ; never choosing to recollect that there were probably less divine causes for them, since, if Providence alone was to operate, it was singular she never had given him greater proofs of her indulgence than by now and then flattering him with some surprising good luck in his hunting matches. He is so persuaded of this doctrine, that he forbade any express being brought to him last war sooner than the evening, and never to disturb him in his usual amusements. His alliance with France is owing partly to the aversion he has to us, and partly to the French faction by which he is surrounded, but chiefly from his family connections, of which he is very proud ; and he feels very strongly the follies his cousin (Louis the Fifteenth) at his age is committing, the more so, as they are follies from which he is entirely exempt, as he even carries chastity to enthusiasm. Thus we have seen him induced to subscribe to the "Family Compact," disadvantageous at any rate to his country, and pernicious to the last degree as it at present stands. Thus we still see him supplying the French with money to forward their pitiful intrigues in Sweden and in Poland, from which no kind of good ever can result to Spain, while his own subjects are starving, and his financiers are at their wits' end. This also serves to alienate from him the minds of his subjects, who, though under a monarchical government, preserve their freedom of thought more than any in the same predicament in Europe ; and although they respect their master, and bear the load laid on them, yet they grow impatient under it, as they see they carry it not for themselves, and that even the common lucre to be gained by labour is made over to foreigners ; since the French shipwright presides in their dockyards, and a French engineer is substituted, to make better gun bar-

rels than those for which their country was, and still is, so famous.

In a word, his present Catholic Majesty has great good qualities, and great bad ones; he is obstinate in his adopted opinions, and never swerves from them either through force or persuasion; but those who know him well, know how to make him adopt what they choose. Thus is he reduced to what many of his brother monarchs are, and may be considered to dispose effectually of nothing but his dogs and game.

The Prince of Asturias* is a stout, healthy prince, with a good heart and clear head; but by a neglected education, and a continued suite of childish amusements, neither the one nor the other does him credit. The King trusts him with nothing, nor allows him even the appearance of doing business. The Prince feels this, but instead of wishing to correct it, seeks his consolation in the field. His youth makes him here even keener than his father, and his address and strength, if polished by elegance and grace, would make him a complete master of the manly exercises. He plays on the fiddle an hour every day, more because he is used to do it than from any taste for music. He generally, except during this hour and those of his meals, occupies the whole day in hunting; and in the evening assembles the exempts and other young courtiers, with whom he plays at lottery on tickets—after the manner of the Archbishop of Canterbury with his chaplains, since he always wins. The Princess always assists at this party, and gives great life and gaiety to it. The Prince is not French; he hates their character,

* Afterwards Charles the Fourth, whose unfortunate reign ceased by an imprisonment in France, and an abdication forced upon him by Napoleon.

and, although he understands the language, never will speak it. These principles have been infused into him by the Dukes of Bejar and St. Estovan, and Don Augustin de Lancastre, all good friends of the English. He, however, does not reason on any of these more serious considerations, and is what he is by contingencies, not by conviction; and we cannot venture to determine his future disposition, as far as regards politics, from his present ideas.

The Princess of Asturias is of the Parma family; an engaging affable character, artful and ambitious, joined to the boundless vanity allowable to one who has the prospect of being Queen of Spain. She has, in common with every race of women, a desire to please, carried even to coquetry, in which she excels. With a thorough French heart, she affects the Spaniard, talks the language in perfection, and seldom, except to the Foreign Ministers, speaks any other. She has gained so thorough a possession of the mind of the Prince, that she guides him at present in everything, and does, at the same time, whatever she chooses. She established the card party, and Lancastre (of whom I shall speak hereafter) is at least as much her favourite as he is that of the Prince. He sits next to her, and she is in a continual conversation, without paying any attention to the game. If she breeds, she may come to act a great part in this country. She has already miscarried twice or three times.*

Besides the Prince and Princess of Asturias, the Royal Family consists of the Infants Don Gabriel Antonio, Xavier, Louis, and the Infanta Doña Maria Josepha.

* She afterwards became the mother of Ferdinand VII. and Don Carlos, and much of the evil which befel Spain thirty years after the date of Mr. Harriss's Journal, may be attributed to this clever and unprincipled woman.

The Infant Don Gabriel is a sportsman ; amuses himself with a poultry-court, and probably will never be of a higher character than at present. The other two, Antonio and Xavier, are too young to have any decisive one ; they seem to bid fair to be like their brothers.

The Infant Don Louis, the king's brother, is of a most amiable disposition, and has a taste of a superior kind. He loves music and painting, but his being obliged to follow continually his brother hunting, prevents him from applying to the arts. He amuses himself with his fowls, of which he has a curious breed, and with his watches, of which he has a most incredible number.

The Infanta is a negative character, a favourite of the King's, but ill with the Princess, through envy and difference of disposition.

The minister, Marquis of Grimaldi, is the youngest of two brothers, of an illustrious Genoese family. He was educated at Rome, and was intended for the Church. In the time of Philip V. he was sent to the Court of Madrid as Minister from the republic of Genoa, at which time he was so handsome as to be named *le bel Abbé*. By an enterprising turn of mind, and sociable disposition, he worked himself well in the minds of those about the Court, and having a decent share of parts, ultimately was received in its service. His first mission in Ferdinand the Sixth's reign was to Sweden, from whence he was removed Ambassador to the Hague, and from thence to Paris, where he rendered himself famous by negociating the "Family Compact,"* and soon afterwards the Peace of Paris. On his return from this embassy, he was named by Charles III. Secretary of State and Minister for Fo-

* Signed in 1761. Establishing an alliance, offensive and defensive, between the two Bourbon Courts of France and Spain.

reign Affairs, in the room of Mr. Wall, and still enjoys that post. His elder brother is first minister at Genoa.

The Marquis Jeronymo Grimaldi has no very extraordinary talents. A competent knowledge of politics *en gros*, acquired more by *routine* than by application, joined to an habitual one of the world, and a good memory, makes him pass, particularly in Spain, for a man of superior understanding. His chief art is conforming to the will of his superiors, and making his inferiors conform to his. He has no extensive notions, or manly ideas; and even in the most evident points can never deviate from his national pitiful cunning. He is dexterous in chicanery, and in confounding an argument; has no good faith or resolution in his manner of transacting business, yet ever has the word *franchise* in his mouth. He appears to have adopted for principle, never to do but what he is obliged to conform to, and not even then till he has defended the cause with every weapon of equivocation, and had recourse to every kind of subterfuge, without entering into its justice or rationality. He is long and *seccante* in his manner of speaking, and avoids hearing others speak as much as he decently can. He is indolent, a late riser, and a great procrastinator. Such are his political qualities. His doctrine is absolutely French; guided in everything by the French closet, he ever has the French interest in view, and considers Spain in a secondary light. I do not accuse him of being a false servant, as I believe he really thinks such a system the most salutary for the master he serves; at least, he has caused him to adopt it, and unless a similar scene* to

* A rising at Madrid, the immediate cause of which was the prohibition of large cloaks by the Police. The Walloon Guards were massacred, but the King escaped to Aranjuez, and the Minister Squillaci, an Italian, who was odious to the people, was dismissed.

that of March 1766 puts an end to his ministry, his Majesty is too accustomed to it to allow us any hopes of change while he lives.

Grimaldi's private character is sociable and good tempered ; he treats humanely every species of dependant, loves planting, building, a good table, and conversation. In his embassies he was always magnificent, gave superb entertainments, and spent his money largely. Since he is Minister he is less profuse, has a daily table of twenty covers, but without superfluous parade, either in their manner of being served or in his domestics. He plays well at cards, but is an unmerciful scolder. He has greatly beautified Aranjuez and St. Ildefonso, and introduced a post to all the sitios, and at each a spectacle, either Spanish or Italian.

When it was proposed to the Prince of Asturias to have the French comedians, who passed through Aranjuez in 1769, on their way to Cadiz, perform at the palace, the Prince not only refused it, but said he would have them flung out of the window, if they came within its walls.

At a dinner where there was a considerable company, chiefly Italian, it was disputed whether *iddio* was not a corruption, and that *dio* was the true word. Although there cannot be the smallest doubt, a youth of the Colonna family maintained the contrary. I ventured to hint to him, that if he recollected his Latin, the word bespoke itself. " What!" replied he, somewhat irritated, " do you think I have forgot it, and that I do not remember Deus, Dea, Deum ?"

SPAIN.—FALKLAND ISLANDS.

In August, 1769, Sir James Gray left Madrid, and Mr. Harris remained as Chargé des Affaires. In the year following, the dispute between England and Spain, relative to the Falkland Islands occurred, and he lost no time in seizing this occasion of displaying the sagacity, temper, and fearlessness of responsibility, which were such striking features of his character. He gave notice to Lord Weymouth, the English Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that an armament was fitting out at Buenos Ayres against our colony at the Falkland Island, and as soon as the outrage was committed,* took upon himself to hold so high a tone to Grimaldi, the Spanish Premier, that the latter could not conceal his alarm. Mr. Harris's account of this feeling on his part encouraged Ministers to insist upon the restitution of the colony, and a disavowal of Bucharelli, the officer who had seized it; and notwithstanding that the Spanish Ambassador in London showed more boldness than his principal at Madrid, the full demands of England were obtained. All the writers on this transaction mention Mr. Harris's conduct with great praise. As he was very young, it was the more remarked, and was the first promise he gave of the talents which afterwards gained him increasing fame in his profession, and successive honours from the Crown.

* For a detailed account of this event—vide Adolphus' History of England, vol. i., p. 441.

EXTRACT OF DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD WEYMOUTH.

St. Ildefonso, August 23d, 1770.

The following fact, which was brought from Buenos Ayres to Cadiz, by the ship St. Nicolas de Bari, does not correspond with the favourable sentiments expressed towards us by this Court. It sets forth that, in consequence of two of His Catholic Majesty's vessels having touched at Port Egmont, in the month of January last, and finding it occupied by the English, who not only refused to evacuate the place, but even denied them admittance, a squadron of five frigates, with three hundred men of the regiment of Mallorca, and the old battalion of Buenos Ayres, were destined to sail from that place the 6th of May, under the command of Monsieur Madarriaga, with orders to dislodge the English there. It has been out of my power, as yet, to gather any farther sights on this subject, except that some people think their getting to St. Egmont is precarious, as the season was so far advanced when they sailed. I must entreat your Lordship, in case I should be honoured with his Majesty's commands respecting it, to give orders for me to be furnished with such papers as are in the office, relating to such disputes as have heretofore happened concerning the Falkland Islands, since I have none of any kind in my possession.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD WEYMOUTH.

St. Ildefonso, 28th Sept. 1770.

I, immediately on the receipt of your Lordship's satisfactory answer, waited on Monsieur de Grimaldi, whom I found already anticipated by a courier he had received

from Prince Masserano,* on the subject I had to lay before him ; and it gave me no small pleasure to perceive, in the course of our conversation, that he was by no means indisposed to pay that attention to it, it deserved. I began by saying, I was come to speak to him on an affair which had given his Majesty the greatest concern and surprise, not only because it attacked so deeply the dignity of the Crown, but also because it was of a nature which put it out of his power to apply such a remedy as he wished. That this inadvertent measure was more felt, as it happened in a moment when the two Courts had been profuse in their protestations of friendship, the one towards the other, and that nothing but the sincere desire his Majesty had of maintaining the public tranquillity, and of showing his cordial affection to His Catholic Majesty, could prevent its disturbing the peace of Europe. That however, as his Majesty had nothing so much at heart as these two points, I had orders to repeat to his Majesty what has already been said to Prince Masserano, in London, and to propose, as the only means of preventing the most fatal consequences, that His Catholic Majesty would disavow the proceedings of Governor Bucharelli, and that he would give the necessary orders for the English established in Falkland Island to be restored to their settlement there, on the same footing they were before this inconsiderate expedition. That I flattered myself, seeing the justice on which this proposition was founded, it would meet with no obstacle ; the more so, as it was evident the measure had been taken without the knowledge or least appearance of authority of His Catholic Majesty. I also took occasion to observe, that in this demand we did not act from the least ill-will or animosity ; that we founded our pretensions singly on the principles of equity

* Spanish Ambassador in London.

and honour, and from which his Majesty could not depart without sacrificing the dignity of his Crown and interests of his subjects; and that, so far from being animated by any such ideas, I told His Catholic Majesty, that at the same time I had received these orders, I was commanded to assure him how much pleasure it had given your Lordship to find the good disposition and candour which appeared in his answer to your memorials I lately presented, and that I had particular instructions to thank him on that account. I concluded by saying he could not but perceive the situation in which this rash step had placed us, which was such a one as nothing but the acceding to the propositions I made could terminate amicably, or put a stop to those preparations which, in the present moment, it was unbecoming his Majesty's honour to postpone.

Mr. Grimaldi answered me in very vague terms concerning the expedition and its success; that we had reason to foresee such an event would happen, since their disapprobation of our establishment on Falkland Island was notorious, and that it had often been the subject of discussions; that, however, he was sorry, exceedingly sorry, it had taken place, and that the moment they heard it was intended, they had despatched a vessel from Corunna to prevent it, which unfortunately arrived too late; that still he could not blame the conduct of Mons. Bucharelli, as it was founded on the established laws of America. Notwithstanding, said he, we are so very desirous of peace, and have so much to lose by war, that we would avoid it at any rate. That all his Catholic Majesty wished for was, to act consistently with his own honour, and the welfare of his people; and that forasmuch as these two points were compatible with our demand, we might be sure of their being

agreed to. "I repeat to you again," added he, "we have so little to get, and so much to lose by a war, that nothing but the last necessity would reduce us to so violent a measure," and that he did not doubt that upon his laying my memorial before the King and his Counsellors, I should receive an answer which would be thoroughly satisfactory to us, and at the same time save their honour. I here remarked, that nothing but the acquiescing in the propositions that I had made could secure ours; and therefore I hoped he would not lose sight of them. That I could positively assure him our desire for peace corresponded with theirs, and that if it should be unfortunately broken through, it would be without a reproach on our side. He replied, all will go well, and I hope in a day or two to enable you to despatch your courier with agreeable intelligence. This conversation passed on Tuesday morning; yesterday Mr. D'Aranda came from Madrid, and this evening, about two hours ago, Mr. Grimaldi took me aside, and said he had laid my memorial before the King, and that his Majesty was resolved to do everything in his power to terminate in an amicable manner this affair. That, therefore, he admitted our demand, and that he assented to it in every point consistent with his honour, which, as well as ours, was to be considered: that, however, as this matter could only be determined in London, and not at Madrid, orders had been given to Prince Masserano to lay before your Lordship the several ideas which had been suggested on this head; and that as they only differed in the terms, and not essentially, he trusted some one of them would be adopted. I begged his Excellency would tell me, in general, in what those terms consisted; he said they were various, we might choose those we like best; that it was needless to tell them to me, since I might be satisfied they differed only

in the mode, not in the effect, from our demand. I then asked him if I might consider this as an answer to my memorial; he said I might, and that he hoped my Court would look upon it as a favourable one, since nothing could induce them to condescend so far, but their great desire of maintaining the good harmony between the two Courts.

This, my Lord, was the sum of the conversation of what passed between this Minister and me on this transaction, and I must entreat your Lordship will forgive me, if I have not detailed it so minutely as I could wish, since I am very eager to despatch Salter so that he may arrive in England at least as soon as a messenger who left this place for Prince Masserano, a few hours ago.

PRIVATE LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD WEYMOUTH.

St. Ildefonso, 28th September, 1770.

There is not the least reason to doubt their sincere desire here of the continuance of peace; as well from their inabilities of supporting a war as from the dread they have of its consequences: not merely respecting its success, but from the effects it may produce on the minds of the people; who, though at present they are kept in subjection by military force, yet would manifest their discontent the moment necessity should require that force elsewhere. In respect to their army, their infantry is very incomplete, and notwithstanding the active efforts of General O'Reilly, still very ill disciplined. Their cavalry is, indeed, on a better footing, yet far short of their establishment, and their horses much inferior to what they formerly were.

Their navy, since the arrival of the Frenchman Gaul-

tier, is considerably augmented, and repaired; they have, however, very few seamen, and the encouragement given to several strangers has disgusted some of their best officers. Their revenues were never in a worse condition; the immense sum brought this year by the Flota was barely sufficient to pay the debt then due; and they are under the necessity of contracting fresh ones, to support even the ordinary expenses of the Court.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD WEYMOUTH.

Madrid, 4th October, 1770.

My Lord, In the conference I had with Mons. de Grimaldi, which I have the honour of relating to your Lordship in mine of this date, I found his ill humour was caused by an express he had just received from Fontainebleau, which informed him of the apprehensions of that Court on the naval armament we were making. He spoke to me on it with a degree of alarm and impetuosity I never found in him. He said it was an ill return to the early intelligence they had given of the expedition to Falkland Island; that he would consider it as a lesson for the future, and not again by his frankness draw himself into a situation to incur the censure of his master, and the reproach of his allies; he could not but suppose that we were meditating some treacherous stroke by the warmth with which we had given these orders, and the celerity with which they were executed. In a word, my Lord, it would be tedious to you to read the strange inconsistent sallies his passion induced him to make. I let it take its vent, and then replied, that although I had not the same leisure as his Excellency to reflect on this fact, yet I stood in no need of it to see it in a very differ-

ent light. That he could not but perceive that it was unbecoming the dignity of the King, my master, to sit idle while an act of direct hostility had been committed on his subjects in America, of which, indeed, though he had notice, yet he had no positive assurance of the consequences it would produce. That these could not be ascertained till such time as my messenger arrived in London, and the Prince Masserano had communicated the propositions he was empowered to make; his Excellency best knew (since he was acquainted with the sentiments of my Court) whether they were of a nature to justify his Majesty's discontinuance of these preparations. That as for our meditating a treacherous stroke, I was sure he was not in earnest when he said it, not only as such a proposition was highly injurious to the King, my master, and his Ministers, but also because it was notorious we had never given so many proofs of our consideration for the Spanish Court as at this moment. I ventured also to add, my Lord, that these preparations would cease, if the instructions given to Prince Masserano corresponded with the assurances he had authorized me to make in my letter to your Lordship by Salter. That he would then see how very unjust these apprehensions were. He replied to me more temperately than in the beginning; "I hope in God," said he, "I shall, and I call Heaven to witness, that we desire nothing so much as peace, or dread anything so much as war." From this conversation of Mons. Grimaldi, and from the whole tenor of the Ministry here, I perceive the greatest consternation; and that so far from a design to break with us, *they fear nothing so much as our breaking with them, and would do anything to palliate the present affair.*

I have the honour, &c.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD WEYMOUTH.

Escurial, 5th October, 1770.

My Lord,—I have great reason to believe that His Catholic Majesty is inclined, personally, to come to an accommodation with us *at almost any rate*, and that these also, from the little encouragement given him by France on this occasion, are the sentiments of Mons. de Grimaldi. Mons. D'Aranda, a warm, enterprising man, is of the contrary opinion, and went so far as to call Mons. de Grimaldi, before the King, an indolent, lazy minister. This has bred ill-blood between them, and Mons. D'Aranda, though he assists at the councils, takes very little share. General O'Reilly, also, I look upon as of the same opinion as Mons. D'Aranda, for although they are by no means well together, yet they would both find their advantages in a war. The rest of the Ministers are only consulted *pro forma*, and very little weight is paid to what they say.

I have the honour, &c.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD WEYMOUTH.

Escurial, 7th October, 1770.

My Lord,—Salter, the messenger, arrived here with your Lordship's despatches on Sunday, October 28, at ten in the evening. I the next day waited on Mons. de Grimaldi, and, as I had very little to add to what I had before said to him on the same subject, I, after having endeavoured in a concise manner to show to him the great moderation with which his Majesty had acted on this occasion, and the just grounds on which his demands were founded, read to him your Lordship's despatch; adding, at the same time, that, if he chose it, I would leave a copy of it with him preferable to any memo-

rial, as well for the sake of avoiding mistakes, as because nothing could give his Excellency so perfect a notion of his Majesty's sentiments. I read it twice over to him, endeavouring to abide by the literal meaning as far as I was able; and, on his desiring me to give it him in French, I told him I had no objection, provided the English original was annexed, by which the sense must be determined; since in an affair of so delicate a nature, the difference of idiom might, by being artfully examined, pervert the true meaning. I accordingly delivered it to him in the manner of the copy subjoined. He heard and answered me with the greatest coolness and temper, that he personally had nothing so much at heart as an amicable accommodation, and that he felt the most sensible concern to find, after the concession they had already made, we still remained unsatisfied. He assured me, also, these were the sentiments of His Catholic Majesty, who was most ready to make us reparation in everything, as far as was compatible with his own honour. "I wish to God," added he, "I knew what you expect; I thought we had done so much that there remained nothing for us to do." I answered him that your Lordship's letter was very explicit, that if he considered the difference, both in the matter of their proposals and in the manner of their intended execution, he could be at no loss to comprehend what we meant, since we had neither added to nor taken from our first demands, but adhered to them invariably. That as they were the most equitable, and, in fact, the only ones we could make consistent with our honour, he ought not to be surprised that we persisted in them. He replied, "We have allowed ourselves to be in the wrong, we have offered the most ample reparation, surely it is very hard, in the point wherein we are insulted, (meaning the menace of Captain

Hunt,*) you will not listen to our solicitations, although they are such as you might acquiesce in without the least diminution of the satisfaction we give you." I returned for answer, that a party injured never could receive satisfaction under any conditional restrictions, since the so doing was a kind of disavowal of the injury; that, however, it was needless for me to dwell on this subject, since, as his Excellency had my instructions in his possession, there remained nothing for me to say from myself.

MR. WALPOLE† TO MR. HARRIS.

Paris, 1st Dec. 1770.

My Dear Sir,—Lausun, the messenger, brings you this with Lord Weymouth's despatches, by which (as I learn by a copy which his Lordship has, by the same means, communicated to Lord Harcourt,‡) you will find that the business is far from being well over, and seems to draw nearer to a rupture than to an accommodation, which, by Prince Masserano's instructions and conduct, seems not to be in the temper of the Spaniards. I cannot account for such unreasonable behaviour in the Court of Spain, and can neither see the justice or the prudence of it. This obstinacy, in not at once granting what the honour of our nation justly requires, makes me think that Court more in the wrong than what I have all along wished, or been inclined to do, for where is the difficulty of disavowing the conduct of a giddy officer, and putting things in the situation they were before the undertaking? If the Court of Spain had never given any orders to the

* When the Commander of the Spanish schooner sent to reconnoitre Port Egmont approached the harbour, Captain Hunt, of the *Tamer*, threatened to fire on him if he did not leave the coast.

† Secretary of Embassy at Paris. ‡ English Ambassador at Paris.

purport which might justify the conduct of their own officer if such orders were ever given, one cannot be surprised at that Court hesitating at giving up the conduct of that officer, who, in obeying them, has done no more than his duty, and who may with justice think it hard to be exposed to the public censure without any political reason appearing for his being disavowed. In order, therefore, to do justice to the conduct of the officer acting under orders, Spain may think herself obliged to exact, if she can, a condition from England for the return of the satisfaction demanded. Nothing, I think, can justify this obstinacy but this kind of reasoning, for if the officer has acted thus rashly of his own head, the Court of Spain is not any ways answerable for his conduct, and ought, in order to throw off all imputations or suspicions from themselves, to disavow the enterprize, and re-establish, however disagreeable it may be to them, our being settled in these seas; in the latter case, of the officer's being entirely in fault, the Court of Madrid cannot form to themselves any reason for demanding anything on our part, at the moment of satisfaction being demanded for the grossest insult that was ever given. Our Court, therefore, keeps firmly to its two first propositions, and will hear of no foreign matter whatever. From what I have seen and heard of this matter, I cannot but strongly approve of their firmness; for if one was to endeavour to account for the view of the Spaniards in what they have done, upon a supposition it was done designedly, it could be no other than that of taking advantage of our divisions and frenzy at home with the colonies,* to force us from those seas, which they imagine they could not do by fair means, thinking that we should not be inclined or prepared to resent it with a becoming firmness, and that we

* Our North American Colonies, which we afterwards lost.

should be induced to come into their proposal of a neutrality as to these islands, rather than go to war for what in itself is of no value at all. I still can hardly believe that this Court will suffer Spain to draw them into a war, and I have still some hopes, though they are very small, that when the Court of Versailles find we persist in refusing to yield to the Court of Madrid, they will make the King of Spain come into our just demand, which every day shows that the nation is prepared to enforce, in case an absolute refusal is given. I can add nothing more to what I wrote you by my letter in cypher, upon the preparations here, than that, upon the flattering hopes of the last despatches from Spain, some regiments which were ordered to march, were countermanded. This, I own, gave me hopes that this Court has powers to finish the business at any rate, but other circumstances make me fear it will be still necessary to receive further instructions from Spain. However, if the event should be war, there can be no doubt of this Court's taking a part in it: at first, perhaps, only as auxiliary, which will be enough for us to draw them in to be principals in a little time after.

I am, dear sir, very sincerely,
Your most affectionate, humble servant,
ROBERT WALPOLE.

Lord Weymouth resigned his office in December,* and was succeeded by Lord Rochford, who had once been Ambassador at Madrid. War was now deemed inevitable, and Mr. Harris was recalled from Madrid owing to the high language still held by Masserano in London. Mr. Harris took leave of the King of Spain, and set off

* In consequence of the clamours of opposition upon these events.—*Harris Papers.*

on his return home, but was met twenty leagues from Madrid by a courier with counter orders from Lord Rochford. These were sent in consequence of Masserano's announcement that Spain conceded our demands. Mr. Harris rode back this distance without drawing bridle, and immediately saw Grimaldi, who, although perfectly conversant with what had passed in London, (as indeed Masserano acted under his instructions,) displayed a pitiful temper in refusing to consider Mr. Harris as re-accredited to his Court. The King soon after made him Minister Plenipotentiary; and, although only twenty-four years of age, he never after served in a subordinate rank.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD ROCHFORD.

Madrid, 13th January, 1771.

My Lord. — Otto, the messenger, delivered to me your Lordship's despatch of the 21st of last month, on the 4th of this, at one in the morning, signifying to me that all negociation having for some time been at an end between Prince Masserano and your Lordship, his Majesty was pleased to recal me from this Court. I at the same time received the several packets for his Majesty's Consul at Cadiz, for the Lieutenant Governor of Gibraltar and for Commodore Crosby, and despatched Otto with them, in a safe and private manner, a few hours after his arrival, directing him to return to England by sea. I have likewise, in consequence of your Lordship's instructions, made use of the same safety and secresy in conveying to the several Consuls in the ports of Spain intelligence of my being recalled, and as before I had advised them of the precarious state in which affairs stand, I hope neither they nor any of his Majesty's

trading subjects will be unprepared for the event. Eight days are now elapsed since I despatched my last courier, a time sufficient for him to be so far advanced in his road as to risk no interruption; I therefore thought it useless to conceal any longer his Majesty's orders, and I yesterday acquainted the Spanish Minister with them at the Pardo. Although such a measure ought not to surprise him, yet he appeared much affected on my notifying it to him; not, however, making use of any vivacious sallies; on the contrary, expressing great concern at the disagreeable turn affairs were likely to take. He asked me whether I had any stated time prescribed me for my departure, or whether I left any one here entrusted with the correspondence. I told him my orders were to leave this place with all convenient speed, after having taken leave in the usual manner. He replied to me, he was extremely sorry, as he was sure the moment he mentioned it to the King, his Majesty would immediately recal his Ambassador from London, and that of course no prospect would remain of that accommodation being brought about, His Catholic Majesty had so much at heart. He here took occasion to recapitulate the whole transaction, and repeated the same language I have more than once written; he concluded by saying, with that warmth natural to him, that it should be made public, and that all Europe should see the equity and candour of His Catholic Majesty's proceedings. As I had nothing to discuss with him, I contented myself with answering him very concisely, and returned to the subject in question by desiring him to lose no time in informing the King of my being recalled, and that he would be pleased to signify to me the time when I could have the honour of taking leave of His Majesty and the Royal Family. The change in the French Ministry has as yet no other

effect here than the giving much personal concern to Monsieur de Grimaldi. Your Lordship is undoubtedly fully informed of the sentiments of the Court of Versailles. It appears here, that they are by no means correspondent with those of this. The people here who, although governed despotically, still preserve a freedom of thought, are more disgusted than ever with the French alliance, and in their conversation put no bounds to their manner of decrying it. Should they find themselves engaged in a war and abandoned by France, the promoters of that alliance here, I fear, will meet but with very ill-treatment.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD ROCHFORD.

Madrid, 9th Feb. 1771.

My Lord,—Salter, the messenger, delivered to me yesterday, at five o'clock, your Lordship's two letters, one of the 18th, and the other of the 22d of that month, at Algoa, an inconsiderable village, upwards of twenty leagues from this town, and I instantly, on having perused them, in order to hasten my return as much as possible, profited by his licence for post horses; and although the roads are very bad, and the night was extremely dark, I had the good luck to arrive here at six this morning without any accident. Immediately on my arrival, I prepared myself to wait upon the Spanish Minister, and was with him at the Pardo a little after ten; and it was with great surprise that I found, in the course of his conversation, he absolutely refused presenting me to His Catholic Majesty as *Chargé des affaires*, or even transacting business with me, unless I produced credentials. It was in vain that I represented to him my having

carried on business here for near a year and a half without my ever having any, and that he could not be ignorant that none in my character ever had. He replied, that with regard to the past, I had been presented to him by the late ambassador, Sir James Gray, and this, according to a generally received custom, authorised me to carry on the affairs; but that immediately on my taking leave, no such pretension remained, and although he had not the smallest doubt of the veracity of what I said, yet it was by no means sufficient my simply presenting myself upon this occasion. He added, that it was very far from his idea to create disgust or ill blood; on the contrary, he was exceedingly sorry to be obliged to act in this manner, which he could not avoid doing, "For in what other light," said he, "can we consider you than as an English gentleman, if you produce not the least proof of your being accredited to this Court, except your barely saying it is so. And you ought not to be surprised," continued he, "if in these matters we act up to the rigid rule of etiquette, which we were amply justified in doing by the abrupt manner in which you were lately recalled. We have a right," said he, "to expect a Minister Plenipotentiary, at least till one of a higher character be arrived; and I greatly flatter myself, your Court will not oppose a nomination, which the recent re-establishment of good harmony between the two nations seems to require." This conversation, my Lord, was of so delicate a nature, relative to myself, that I was obliged considerably to limit my answer, lest I should appear to have any interested views, which I can assure your Lordship are very far from my thoughts. Finding him so resolute in this point, I returned to this, place, and lose no time in re-despatching Salter with a detail of this conversation, as it has placed me in a most

embarrassing situation. I hope I do not amiss in remaining here till such time as I receive your Lordship's instructions how to act. I must rely on your Lordship's candour to forgive me if I do not relate as concisely as I ought, what passed between Mons. de Grimaldi and myself, but I am really so fatigued with the long journey I made on horseback, and through want of sleep, that it is out of my power to do it in a clearer manner. I can only add, My Lord, that Mons. de Grimaldi treated this matter not in hasty terms, but with temper and moderation, and that the same time he objected doing business with me without credentials, he personally gave me the strongest assurances of regard; and it would be impertinent in me to mention to your Lordship the many polite things he said to me, as well from himself, as from His Catholic Majesty. As I have been absent now upwards of a week from Madrid, without any possibility of getting intelligence, and as since my return I have been wholly occupied either with Mons. de Grimaldi or with writing this, it is out of my power to send your Lordship any material news. The declaration Prince Masserano signed, and which his Majesty has been pleased to accept, has caused the greatest joy to every rank of people in this kingdom, and I believe no one is discontented except Mons. D'Aranda and his faction, who, from the beginning, were inclined for war. I shall not fail, as events happen, communicating them to your Lordship.

I have the honour, &c.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD ROCHFORD.

Madrid, 14th February, 1771.

My Lord,—I must entreat your Lordship to forgive me if I trouble you with a private letter, but I am induced to do it from my wishing to give your Lordship every intelligence in my power, and from my particular desire of proving to you my perfect respect and esteem. I mentioned to your Lordship, in mine of the 9th, that the reconciliation between the two Courts gave entire satisfaction here; I then meant only to the nation,* as I am persuaded, had this Court been seconded by that of Versailles, it never would have been brought about, and the Ministers of His Catholic Majesty subscribed merely not to bring the "Family Compact" into disgrace, which would have been rendering it ridiculous to all Europe, had France, as she certainly would, swerved from her engagements the first time she was called on to fulfil them. His Catholic Majesty personally, from his natural tranquil disposition, is exceedingly pleased, and manifests it in a more evident manner than Mons. de Grimaldi wishes; and I am assured he has been heard to say, that he is glad to have an opportunity of proving his good faith, and his sincere desire of avoiding war. He also expresses great satisfaction from the gracious manner his Majesty received Prince Masserano at Court, after the signing the Declaration, which that Ambassador mentions in his despatches, and is much satisfied with the nomination of an Ambassador from our Court. This Minister, however, Mons. de Grimaldi does not feel the

* The Duc de Choiseul, who would have supported Spain, just at this time fell before the influence of Madame du Barri, and France retreated from the obligations she had incurred by the "Family Compact."—*Harris Papers.*

same on this occasion; the chagrin he suffers from the loss of his personal credit in France, and the odious reflections Count D'Aranda and his faction cast on him from the inconsistent manner (as they call it) in which he has conducted this affair, has filled him with ill-humour and peevishness; and to this turn of temper, I am inclined to think, I chiefly owe the reception he lately gave me. They keep the declaration here as secret as possible; I do not find any one to whom they have shown it, except to those they are obliged to communicate it. They also report that we have given a verbal assurance to evacuate Falkland Island in the space of two months.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD ROCHFORD.

Madrid, 7th March, 1771.

My Lord, — I had barely finished my letter, of this date, when Don Bernardo Campo, principal courier of Mons. de Grimaldi's office, delivered me your Lordship's despatch, of the 22nd of last month, which informed me that his Majesty had condescended to approve my conduct, and to honour me with credentials as his Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary at this Court till the arrival of Lord Grantham. It is impossible for me to express to your Lordship what I feel on this occasion, nor the sentiments of duty and gratitude which arise in my breast for this distinguished mark of his Majesty's favour.

Lord North was Prime Minister at this time, and on the subject of the negociations respecting the Falkland Island, party ran very high in England. Lord Chatham headed the Opposition, and accused the Government of compromising the honour of the country, and of having made a secret article with Spain to re-abandon the Island, although he had no better authority for his statement than letters from Colonel Barry and Mr. Calcraft, both violent partizans. It appears from Mr. Harris's papers that the restitution was, both in letter and spirit, a *bona fide* one, without any such article; and although Ministers were at first inclined to think the colony not worth quarrelling about, upon the account he sent of Grimaldi's timid bearing, they took up and carried the matter through with a high hand.

BERLIN.

FROM MARCH 1, TO DECEMBER 20, 1774.

In 1771 Mr. Harris was appointed Minister at the Court of Berlin, Frederick the Great being then King of Prussia. The following correspondence will show with how little interest the partition of Poland, executed by Russia, Austria, and Prussia, was noticed by the English Government.

It appears that no remonstrance or expression of disapprobation was uttered by Lord Suffolk, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, until the spoliation was announced by the three powers, and even then it scarcely amounted to either. He only styles it "A curious transaction," when first announced to him by Mr. Harris!

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, March 1, 1772.

Just as I am going to make up my packet, I am informed that a treaty of partition, disposing of several parts of Poland, was signed at Petersburg the 15th of last month; and that, as soon as the certifications can be signed and exchanged between the Courts

of Vienna, Berlin, and Russia, a Congress will be held at Warsaw. General Bellin, who commanded the corps in Polish Prussia, is recalled and disgraced; and, as General Anhalt left Potzdam this morning very early with six waggons, it is supposed he is gone to take that command. General Anhalt is a very able officer, and one in whom the King has the greatest confidence. The post being just going, it is impossible for me to add more.*

LETTER FROM STANISLAUS, KING OF POLAND, TO MR. HARRIS.

Varsovie, ce 25 Mars, 1772.

My dear Harris,—Votre lettre du 17, courant m'a fait véritablement un très grand plaisir. L'attachement affectueux et constant d'un homme de votre espèce, flatte l'esprit et console le cœur de celui qui en est l'objet. Vous êtes fait pour qu'on vous croye; ainsi je compte surement que vous ferez pour-moi ce que vous pourrez. Je vous prie donc d'aider Kevilecki autant qu'il sera en votre pouvoir; et je vous demande cela d'autant plus hardiment, que je suis certain que politiquement et personnellement, vous serez approuvé de votre Maître, en tout ce que vous ferez, pour aider à diminuer les maux affreux de la Pologne, et par conséquent pour diminuer ma peine. Vous avez cru quitter un pays déjà malheureux en sortant de Pologne; eh bien c'étoit un séjour de félicité en comparaison de ce que la Pologne est aujourd'hui, et surtout dans cette partie qui avoisine les Etats du Roy de Prusse. Adieu, j'espère ne me tromper jamais, en vous appellant mon ami.

S. K. P.

* Count Kevilecki was Envoy from the King of Poland at the Court of Berlin.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 7th April, 1772.

I have good reason to believe, that the treaty relative to the distribution of certain districts in Poland, returned here from Vienna, ratified, yesterday, and that it will not be long before the whole transaction will be made public. The King of Prussia has made a present of twenty thousand crowns to the Count de Solms, which I scarce think he would have done, without being sure of what he was about. The Department for Foreign Affairs here, is at this moment greatly occupied, and they are despatching many couriers, probably with an account of the conclusion of this negotiation. I am positively assured, that the Court of Vienna has not only kept that of Versailles totally in the dark, but amused her with demands which gave her reason to believe, that she would never submit to any aggrandizement of the King of Prussia's dominions.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM THE EARL OF SUFFOLK TO MR. HARRIS.

St. James's, June 5th. 1772.

SIR,—I DO not know how to reconcile the unwillingness you say the King of Prussia affects, to be put in possession of Polish Prussia, to the boast I am well informed he has been fond of making, of his projected acquisitions. Time will shew the extent of them, and of those which are to purchase the acquiescence of the Courts of Petersburg and Vienna. At present I have some reason to appre-

hend the terms and quantum of this curious transaction are not positively settled, though there is no doubt of the general plan and intention. I am curious to see the manifesto which his Prussian Majesty is to publish on this occasion. The diligence and accuracy with which you conduct the King's business, convince me I shall receive it from you the first moment you are able to obtain it.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM THE EARL OF SUFFOLK TO MR. HARRIS.

St. James's, June 26th, 1772.

SIR,—Your letters have been laid before the King, and you may rest assured that the assiduity, vigilance, and discretion with which you conduct yourself are much approved.

I hear from Warsaw, that the consternation in that Court on the subject of the dismemberment, is as great as it is natural to expect it would be. The Prussian Ambassador, till very lately, has professed total ignorance and incredulity on the subject of a partition treaty, and now, without positively avowing it, affects to express much concern at some recent advices from his Court, which are supposed to relate to the subject; whilst the Austrian Minister at St. Petersburgh pretends to be much dissatisfied and disgusted with the King of Prussia's claim. It is in vain to form conjectures on this strange transaction. How far the Courts are minutely agreed, or what remains to be adjusted, a little time will discover; for my own part, I cannot help thinking, that they are sowing the seeds of future disturbances, instead of rest or tranquillity to that part of Europe; still I conclude that there is no

truth in reports, that the King of Prussia was to have taken possession of Polish Prussia on the 15th instant, as you have not mentioned it in any of your letters.

SUFFOLK.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 4th July, 1772.

THINGS appear to remain in the same state of suspension as when I last wrote, and it is impossible for me either to collect any facts, or form any conjectures worthy your Lordship's attention. I still am of opinion, that the two other Courts are only driving a bargain with that of Vienna, who, on her side, is very unwilling to diminish in any manner her pretensions. Her troops are by this time entered in Leopold, and occupy almost the whole district which is to fall to her share. The King's officers, as well Civil as Military, act as if Polish Prussia already belonged to their master. I am told that he has given orders for repairing and enlarging the port and harbour of Bugenwalde, a seaport in Pomerania, not far from Colberg, and that it should be made spacious enough to contain a fleet of men-of-war.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 28th July, 1772.

THE only intelligence I can obtain relative to the particularity of the diminution of the share which the Court of Vienna is to have in the supposed division of Poland is, that they have consented to give up the town of

Cracow with the country adjoining, which, as I mentioned to your Lordship, it was the interest of his Prussian Majesty not to let fall into their hands. They, however will not agree to restore the salt pits of Wielicska, but, at the same time, oblige themselves to sell the salt to the Poles, at the same price they now buy it, without ever having it in their power to raise it on any pretext whatsoever. By this means *the whole loss falls on the Revenues of the King.* I am likewise told, although I do not know whether equally true, that they no longer insist on the town of Leopold, although General Esterhazy is still there with a considerable body of cavalry. These resolutions, I am assured, are the ultimatum of the Court of Vienna, and that their Minister here expressed this so strongly, that the King of Prussia did not attempt to drive the bargain any further, but expressed great satisfaction, as, indeed, he had great reason to do. The approbation of the Court of Petersburg appears now to be the only step wanting to conclude this affair; and if the report we have heard here, of a conspiracy in that country against the Empress in favour of the Grand Duke be true, its execution will probably be accelerated. Some say, that the Empress of Russia will insist on the guarantee of the Maritime Powers for the navigation of the Vistula, and particularly that of Denmark, who, in case the King of Prussia should violate the treaty, on any ships navigating that river, is to retaliate on those of Elbing and Koningsberg, which pass through the Sound.

DESPATCH FROM THE EARL OF SUFFOLK TO MR. HARRIS.

St. James's, August 7th, 1772.

SIR,—Your letters have been laid before the King.

You will be curious to know what kind of answer he has thought proper to give to the Polish memorials, delivered here to me, and at Warsaw to Mr. Wroughton. These were merely general applications for the King's good offices and interposition, without reference to any treaty or guarantee. The answer which has been returned here, and will be given at Warsaw, *is verbal*, tending to shew, in general, how inefficacious any public intervention would be in the present advanced state of the transaction. But though it may be perceived from what has been said upon the subject, that his Majesty does not consider the affair of such present importance as to justify acting to prevent it, yet nothing has been expressed which can be construed into the remotest *approbation* of it, or indeed convey an idea that the King regards it with indifference.

Your intelligence has the appearance of great accuracy, and I rely much upon it. Your remarks are very judicious, and afford me much satisfaction. I do not mean to impede either by sending the outlines of different advices which I receive from other quarters. If credit is to be given to the professions of the Russian minister, the plan of partition is, even at this moment, far from being precisely regulated. He goes so far as to insinuate, that should any intentions of this sort exist, it is a distant business, the execution of which is very remote. I do not report this circumstance to you as much to be relied on. My object is to inform a minister who conducts himself with so much vigilance as you do, and, without any com-

pliment, has so much merit, in every particular which can possibly assist his endeavours to promote the King's service.

I am, with great truth and regard, Sir,
Your most obedient and humble servant,
SUFFOLK.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, Saturday 22nd August, 1772.

MY LORD,—Since my last, I have been honoured with your Lordship's letter of the 7th instant.

I should be very unhappy if any intelligence of mine should mislead your Lordship, and am particularly cautious in whatever I write, to confine myself as much as is in my power to facts well asserted, or to natural conclusions drawn from such facts. Your Lordship, I know, makes allowance for the singular secrecy with which business is carried on by his Prussian Majesty, and I am sure, will pardon me on this account if my intelligence is not always so accurate as it ought to be. Notwithstanding the professions of Mons. Mouschkin Pouschkin, I must confess to your Lordship, that I look upon the plan of partition of Poland as a matter not only regulated, but on the eve of its execution. The Austrian courier, from Petersburg, passed through here Wednesday last, the 19th instant, on his road to Vienna; and, if I may credit what I hear from a person generally well informed, with a satisfactory answer to the last propositions of the Courts of Vienna and Berlin. If my informant, too, can be depended on, the negotiations of the Congress were expected to be brought to a favourable conclusion about the 10th of this month; and the cou-

riers, with an account of this event, may be expected towards the end of it. Of course it is probably then that the three powers will turn their attention towards Poland, beginning each with taking his respective share, and following the plan I mentioned to your Lordship—(.) The foreign troops are to winter in the Republic, and form a circle round that part of it which is to remain entire, in order, in case of resistance, entirely to subdue that unfortunate people. Some say the Diet will be held as usual at Warsaw, but that deputies will be sent from it to meet Commissaries from the three Courts at Konigsberg, with full powers to regulate whatever may remain unsettled in the arrangement of Poland. These accounts tally so well with the appearances of things here, that I own I cannot but give great credit to them. The King has sent generals Möllendorff and Brinckendorff into Polish Russia;—the first, probably, to act in his military capacity, which is very great; the other to regulate the distribution of the inhabitants and the interior economy of the country, for which, likewise, he has a peculiar talent.

I have, &c.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, Saturday, 5th September, 1772.

My Lord,—The apparent Revolution in Sweden* causes much speculation here. I own to your Lordship, that I cannot consider it but as an operation which has taken place with the knowledge and approbation of the two

* The King of Sweden, who was nephew of Frederick the Great, abolished the Constitution as re-established at the death of Charles XII., and declared himself absolute.

Courts of Petersburg and Berlin. The King of Sweden, however considerable his pecuniary assistance may be from France, cannot be weak enough to imagine he could effect or maintain a change in the government of his country against the consent of two such powerful neighbours, particularly at a moment when peace is on the eve of being concluded,* and Russia will have a large body of troops unemployed. Prince Henry (whose journeys have never been merely of curiosity), before he went to Russia, stayed a long time in Sweden, travelled through the whole country, and I know departed a good deal from his natural character in order to make himself popular. The Queen Dowager,† on her visit here, had often political conversations with the King; and, although now, in her letters from Stralsund, she affects a great surprise at what has happened, yet I know a person to whom she hinted something of the kind so long as two months ago. In short, my Lord, if I may be allowed to conjecture, it does not appear to me impossible, that the two Northern Courts will consent to put a more extensive power into the hands of the King of Sweden; on condition, however, that the rest of Finland be given up to Russia, and Swedish Pomerania either ceded or sold to the King of Prussia for the sums his father had agreed to pay for it. That in the meantime they allow his Swedish Majesty to amuse the Court of Versailles, in order to draw as much money from them as he can. I should not have conceived such an idea, had I not been used to the refined politics of his Prussian Majesty; neither now should I have ventured to have communicated it to your Lordship, was I not persuaded that you would give no further credit to it than you find

* Between Russia and Turkey. † Sister to Frederick the Great.

it correspond with your other intelligence, if it should not prove founded. If this be the case, I think there is a fair opportunity of giving some jealousy at the Court of Petersburg, by insinuating that there is an appearance of the King of Prussia having been privy to this transaction, which may be supported by his brother Henry's journey to Stockholm, and the Queen Dowager's visit here. I have taken the liberty of signifying thus much to Mr. Gunning,* I have, &c.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 19th Sept. 1772.

I RECEIVED a message from Count Finckenstein yesterday morning, desiring to speak to me between twelve and one. On my waiting on him, he informed me, that his Prussian Majesty, having come into an agreement with the Courts of Vienna and Petersburg, to renew certain ancient claims they had on parts of the Kingdom of Poland, had instructed their respective ministers at the Court of Warsaw, to signify their intentions to the King and Republic, by presenting him with a declaration on this subject.

That his Prussian Majesty desirous of seizing every opportunity of shewing his friendship and attention to the King, had ordered him, Count Finckenstein, to take the earliest moment of acquainting me with this event, and at the same time to give me a copy of the declaration which I here enclose. That his Chargé d'Affaires at London,

* English Minister at Petersburg.

had likewise received orders to inform the King's Ministers on this subject, and to communicate to them the declaration.

In the course of yesterday Monsieur de Finckenstein, sent for all the Foreign Ministers, and made known to them this event, expressing himself in the very same words, as far as I can learn, to all, without the smallest variation.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, Saturday 19th Sept., 1772.

My Lord—After Count Finckenstein had ended his conversation with me, on the subject of the Division of Poland, he, of his own accord, began talking to me of the affairs of Sweden. He said that, although there was great reason to believe that the whole had been a concerted plan, yet the secret had been so well kept, that the event came totally unexpected to his Prussian Majesty; and that notwithstanding the King of Sweden had shewn great resolution in the moment of carrying it into execution, yet he wished it might not be attended with very fatal consequences, as well for himself as for this country, since it was almost impossible that Russia could ever quietly submit to see so total a revolution take place in that government, or so very extensive a power, get into the hands of its Sovereign. I took the liberty of asking him whether the King of Prussia meant to concur in any measures the Court of Russia might take on this occasion. He replied, his Majesty was desirous of taking no active part in it, that his connexions with the two Courts were such, as to make him wish to remain quiet. That, as Russia was the nearest concerned,

the whole depended on the manner in which she would consider this affair. In short, my Lord, I find that Russia is to be supposed to give the lead, and that, afterwards, if the King of Prussia should appear, he probably will draw his reasons from the conduct of that Court, the same as he pretended the idea of dividing Poland was first suggested to him from the claims of the Empress Queen. It is wholly unnecessary my adding any speculations to the conversation of Count Finckenstein on either of these subjects; I can say nothing new concerning that which relates to Poland. The departure of M. De Swieten, and the delivering out the Declaration, clearly proves that it is concluded without a possibility of interruption. I shall not fail giving a great share of my attention to the other, and communicating to your Lordship the most accurate intelligence I can collect relative to it. I have, &c.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM THE EARL OF SUFFOLK TO MR. HARRIS.

St. James's, October 2nd, 1772.

SIR,—My answer to the Declarations on the Dismemberment of Poland, delivered to me on Wednesday last, by the Ministers of the Three Powers respectively concerned in it, was as follows:—"Le Roi veut bien supposer, que les trois Cours sont convaincues de la justice de leurs prétentions respectives, quoique Sa Majesté n'est pas informée des motifs de leur conduite." You will observe on the terms in which I express myself, that, though this mode of expression was preferable to an absolute silence, the utmost caution has been used, not to convey any favourable sentiments of a transac-

tion, which, from its inconsistency with national equity and public honour, must engage his Majesty's disapprobation; though it has not been so immediately interesting as to deserve his interposition.

SUFFOLK.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 13th Oct. 1772.

I SHALL spare no pains in endeavouring to penetrate into the measures and conduct of his Prussian Majesty; which, however, at this moment, are kept so exceedingly secret, that it is impossible even to guess what the next step he takes will be: indeed, there appears as if there was a kind of momentary pause in his operations, and that he waits to see whether the Congress will be renewed, and if it should, what part Russia will act in Sweden, as well as how far the Court of Vienna will be favourably or coolly disposed, before he takes any essential resolution. I own, my Lord, I cannot help thinking that he has views on Stralsund and Swedish Pomerania, and from the very singular dominion he has over the Councils of the Empress of Russia, he sooner or later will bring his point to bear. I am well assured there are apprehensions of this kind in Sweden, and that the very few patriotic Swedes who remain, fear much more from the Court of Berlin, than from that of Petersburg. He has taken possession of Polish Prussia with an amazing rapidity, and the effects of his government are already felt through every part of his new acquisitions. He has taken 100,000*l.* on the land, and is employing it in different ameliorations, chiefly in cutting canals, and improving the entrance into the harbour of Dantzic, at the mouth of the Vistula; that

town, as well as Thorn, must, in a short time, inevitably solicit his protection, unless some very unforeseen event should happen in their favour.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 21st Nov. 1772.

THE Prussian troops advance in Poland greatly beyond the limits they at first prescribed themselves, and there is good reason to apprehend his Prussian Majesty will take possession of the Palatinates of Posen and Kalisch, founding his pretensions on their formerly making part of the Duchy of Glogau. The Austrians on their side extend their possessions greatly beyond what was set forth in the letters patent of the Empress Queen, and treat the Poles on that side of the Republic with as much rigour as the Prussians on this. It is imagined that these have furnished the pretext of the disorders which lately have appeared among the Poles themselves in Great Poland—that, in keeping up the anarchy which reigns in that unfortunate country, they may more easily effect their purposes. There is still an immense quantity of bad money distributed by the Prussian troops, which the Poles are obliged to take, but which his Prussian Majesty will not allow as current in his new acquisitions. I heard the other day a computation made, by which it appears that he has already drawn from that country four millions sterling and upwards.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 26th Dec. 1772.

I HAVE reason to believe, that great part of the Partition treaty remains still unexecuted, and that the remnant of the unfortunate Republic of Poland will, with a very small exception, fall into the hands of the three dividing powers. His Prussian Majesty is, I am assured, so bent on this project, that he is determined not to defer its execution later than the spring. It is with this view solely he has caused his army to be put into a state of readiness, as well to intimidate the Poles, as to be prepared to resist any power that should think proper to oppose him; he, however, at the same time, expects no opposition from any quarter, as the Emperor entirely concurs with him in all his measures, and Russia appears in a manner devoted to his interests. In regard to the town of Dantzic, he is, I believe, convinced that his own advantage requires him to act towards it differently from the manner in which he has begun.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO MR. BATT.*

Berlin, 1773.

I CAN give you no reason, my dearest friend, why I am a worse correspondent now than in Spain, unless it be, that the very few good things to be met with here prevent my being furnished with the same subjects for writing which I found there. The private life of Berlin

* Mr. Batt was Mr. Harris's intimate friend and the companion of his youth. He became a Master in Chancery, and obtained great reputation and a large fortune in his profession. He had talents in conversation, and was a good speaker and scholar. His letters are clever, and at the outset of life he is constantly accusing Mr. Harris of too much ambition, whilst his

will not bear being set upon paper, and the public one is of too delicate a nature to be entrusted to it. My own, since I have been here, taking it either in a private or public capacity, has been absolutely void of events, and I scarce ever recollect to have passed a year in such perfect tranquillity. I am grown fat of course, lazy and stupid, and here probably you will be able to account why I have been so tardy in answering your letters. I will now endeavour to repair this negligence, and open my whole budget to you; luckily a safe opportunity offers at a moment, when I have something that I wish to communicate to you, and which I could not have done by the common conveyance of the post—le voici. About a week ago I received a letter from Eden* to the following purpose:

That it was known that Berlin was a disagreeable post for an English Minister, and that there was little respect shewn them, and that from the temper of the two Courts there was at this instant no probability of any material business occurring between them. That from these considerations, and from his friendship for me, he was induced to mention to me, in great secrecy, the following proposal:

That, as his Majesty's Minister at Copenhagen had conducted himself in a very injudicious manner, his Majesty, who had particularly at heart the object of that commission,† as it so nearly concerned the in-

friend retaliates upon him with a want of it. At the age of seventy they were again walking through the Close of Salisbury, the scene of their boyish discussions, and resumed them by a dispute as to which of the two had been the most successful in life, Mr. Batt, who had gained a fortune without honours, or Lord Malmesbury, who had obtained honours to the detriment of his fortune.

* Mr. Eden was in the Foreign Office.

† Respecting the King's sister's (Mathilda Queen of Denmark) disputes with her husband, and the conspiracy formed against them, vide Adolphus' Hist. of Eng. Vol. i. p. 534.

terests of his family, had expressed the greatest dissatisfaction. That Lord Suffolk, on talking this matter over with him, had mentioned my name, and that his Majesty was pleased to express his entire approbation. But, however, as Lord Suffolk from the late regulation in his department, cannot accompany the change with a higher character, or pecuniary advantage, he thought if he proposed it to me I should accept with reluctance. That he (Eden) is of a different opinion, and supposes that I should embrace with eagerness an opportunity of distinguishing my zeal for his Majesty's service, and would afford me a share of business of the most honourable and brilliant nature. I answered, a few days afterwards, to this effect:

That I was highly sensible of his friendship; that Berlin was at this moment what he described it; but from the character of his present Majesty might, from one day to another, become the greatest scene of politics in Europe. That Copenhagen I allowed at this moment to be one of immediate action, but from contingencies it might turn out directly contrary to his description of it. That of course it was not a desirable station for one of an active mind, and who wished for an opportunity to distinguish himself.

That, moreover, it was looked on as an inferior Court, and, without some very ostensible motive, I should appear to be going backward in my career.

It is very little necessary for me to subjoin any commentary of my own to the contents of these letters, as I flatter myself you will see the affair in the same light as I do, and not condemn the manner in which I have acted. I had not time to consult you on the subject, and have followed the dictates of that good genius which, if one lets him alone, seldom leads into error. If it is only a

ministerial job to place somebody else here (which I do not believe), they have not overreached me. I think, my dear friend, I am now fairly in the saddle, and I confess to you, more from the desire of not being a mere cipher than any other motive, I am resolved to push on in my career as long as I see a ray of the ladder, which is within my compass, to mount. I feel the many disagreeable circumstances that attend a foreign life, amongst which the perpetual banishment from my country and friends is the most sensible. I however reflect, that every other state of life has also its bad side; and that even in the bosom of one's family, if the mind is totally unoccupied, one is subject to moments of dissatisfaction and spleen, and all that tribe of ill humour which the indolence and inactivity of a home life are too apt to create. I, too, have perhaps a kind of constitutional philosophy, which stands me in good stead, and that joined to the idea which I believe to be as well founded as the existence of God, that the generality of mankind is the same everywhere, makes me indifferent almost to any place of residence, since it cannot be that, where those to whom I owe the greatest affection live.

None can be worse for the comforts of social life than Berlin. Berlin is a town where, if "fortis" may be construed honest, there is neither "Vir fortis nec fœmina casta." A total corruption of morals reigns throughout both sexes in every class of life, joined to penuriousness, necessarily caused partly by the oppression of his present Majesty, and partly by the expensive ideas they received from his grandfather, constituting the worst of human characters. The men are constantly occupied how to make straightened means support the extravagances of their life. The women are harpies, debauched through want of modesty, rather than from want of anything else.

They prostitute their persons to the best payer, and all delicacy of manners or sentiment of affection are unknown to them.

Bad as this description is, I do not think I draw the picture in too bad colours. I came without any prepossession, and venture to suppose that I live here with too great a variety of people to be blinded by prejudices. All I can say in their favour is, that the example of irreligious neglect of all moral and social duties raised before their eyes by the King—I say this, joined to the success of all his undertakings, and the respect he enjoyed throughout Europe, have infatuated their better judgment, and shown them vice in too advantageous a light.

You will ask me how I live with these people?—why, very well. I have no intimate friend, either male or female. I have, by cautiously avoiding to offend or criticize, ensured myself a good reception on the part of the principal persons. I am at all times very graciously treated by his Prussian Majesty, and am well with his Ministers. The little attention I pay to scandal and *médisance* exempts me from all female *tracasseries;* and some occasions I have had to show how much I am above a dirty or mean action, prevent the men from becoming too familiar with me. In short, without any one positive enjoyment of social life, I have no subject of complaint, and my time passes off very tolerably. I rise early, see nobody till dinner, generally dine at home with two or three of my acquaintances, go to the French play or to Court, and sup generally abroad, except once a month—when I have a supper of twenty-four or thirty covers at home. I have a large garden, a good English horse, &c.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Berlin, Tuesday 12th Jan. 1773.

My Lord, — The manner in which the Court of Russia appears to interest herself for the preservation of the town of Dantzic, has convinced his Prussian Majesty that the Empress will not readily consent to his being put in possession of that city, and this joined to the refusal of the magistrates to enter into negociation with Mons. Richard, has greatly broke into his views, since I am confidently assured, that had he not met with this opposition from Petersburg, he would have employed force at Dantzic, and afterwards have alleged for reason, either the ancient claims of his family, or the infringements of the Partition Treaty on the part of Austria, which would have authorized him, on his part to exceed the bounds prescribed in it. At this moment, however, he does not choose to venture either of these pretexts, and will, I believe, have recourse to every kind of stratagem rather than give umbrage to the Empress of Russia, of whose friendship and good will he knows the utility. I own, at the same time, he has carried matters so very far, that I cannot help considering that sooner or later he will strain them still a point farther, and rely on the sway he has with several Courts, and his own established reputation, for the event. He, in the meanwhile, seems to be calculating every kind of means of draining his new possessions to the utmost, and as the revenue he expected from his salt company is likely to fall short of near two-thirds of the sum for which it was given in, to be resolved to recover it by engrossing several other articles of commerce. I am told (though I can scarcely give credit to it) that he intends laying an embargo

on the corn, and every species of grain, foreigners and others have agreed to purchase from the Poles, paying them the sum they bargained for, and afterwards selling the whole on his own account, and for his own price; a scheme has likewise been proposed to him for the monopoly of wine of all sorts, and I am assured, as soon as it is thoroughly digested will be put in execution. All these different exclusive rights will be thrown into the hands of his new trading company, which at present appears to be his favourite project.

I have, &c.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 6 February, 1773.

The step the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick* has taken, has given the greatest concern to his father and family, and they express themselves in the strongest terms on the occasion. It was concerted by his Prussian Majesty, during the last reviews in Silesia, at which the Prince Hereditary assisted. Besides that of having an excellent general in his service, his Prussian Majesty was particularly desirous of bringing this point to bear, with a view of lessening the importance of his brother Henry, who (and not without reason) looked upon himself as the only general officer in this service qualified, in case of a war, to take the command of a separate army.

A treaty made between Queen Anne and the city of Dantzic, giving great privileges to British merchants in 1707, was further confirmed by that of Utrecht. Frederick, after the partition of Poland, seized the territories

* He had entered the Prussian Service.

of Dantzic, placed enormous import duties on British articles, and a heavy export duty on wheat.*

All remonstrances on our part were useless, and the hatred of the King of Prussia to England was so great at this time, that it probably ruled his commercial policy as much as his evident ignorance upon the subject.

England behaved with great tameness on this occasion, and seems to have confined her assistance to advising the Dantzickers to make good terms with Frederick whilst they could.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 27th February, 1773.

I HAVE good reason to believe that Mons. De Panin † has, through Comte Solms, communicated to his Prussian Majesty, the several conversations he has had with Mr. Gunning, ‡ relative to the affairs of Dantzic, and free navigation of the Vistula; and that that Minister, in his despatches to the King, his master, on this subject, has exaggerated every article, and done his utmost to paint the object of Mr. Gunning's negociations in as unfavourable colours as possible. This has not a little added to the ill-humour of his Prussian Majesty, and has given him an opportunity of endeavouring to create a coolness between us and the Court of Petersburg; since, if I am well informed, he, by a messenger despatched a few days

* Exempli gratia, for Mr. Cobden's disciples, who defy any despotic monarch to do the like for fear of being treated as a tyrant by his own, and a fool by other people. Frederick the Great, looking to his actual convenience and our immediate annoyance, braved public opinion, and so would his descendants if it suited them.

† Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Empress Catherine, and during his whole official life in the pay of Frederick, as the Harris papers shew *passim*.

‡ English Minister at Saint Petersburg.

back to the Empress of Russia, after having attempted to prove how ill-grounded all complaints were against his proceedings in Poland, insinuated that it little became so great a power as that of her Imperial Majesty to suffer a dictatorial language to be held to her, or to hear any propositions which could only tend to separate her from her best allies, and which, at the same time, if carried into execution, would be very far from being advantageous to the interests of her empire. The dominion his Prussian Majesty has over the councils of Petersburg, and the infatuation with which everything is received there that comes from Potsdam, will, I am afraid, cause the Empress to listen with more attention to this insidious language than it deserves, and entirely prevent her from taking any share with us for the preservation of the liberties of Dantzic and commerce of Poland. Should this be the case, it is to be apprehended that the Court of Vienna, however favourably she may be disposed, will also decline interfering in these matters, and that our representations notwithstanding the just and reasonable grounds on which they are founded, will, unless supported by other arguments, prove fruitless.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 23rd March, 1773.

In consequence of your Lordship's instructions I despatched, the following day, my valet de chambre, Pierre Lancy, to Dantzic, with orders to wait till such time as he receives Mr. Corry's answer.* I have already communicated to Prince Dolghorouki,† the manner in which his Majesty has been pleased to declare his sentiments to

* English Consul at Dantzic. † Russian Minister at Berlin.

the town of Dantzic, and shall not fail, in obedience to your Lordship's commands, to keep that Minister acquainted with what I may receive relative to this subject. Your Lordship may, at the same time, depend that I shall avoid, with the greatest precaution, taking any steps which may lead to an admission of the rights of his Prussian Majesty, in consequence of the convention between the three Courts, and at the same time prevent, as far as lies in my power, any unjust interpretation being given to the conduct his Majesty has thought proper to adopt on this occasion.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, April 13th, 1773.

As the letter Mr. Corry mentions to your Lordship as written to him by one of the Magistrates, contains many strong personal reflections on his Prusian Majesty, and as it is infinitely too long to put into cipher, I do not think it safe to trust it to the common conveyance of the post, and hope that the abstract which follows will satisfy your Lordship till such time as I can send it by the return of Lauzun from Petersburg.

The writer of it sets forth, in the beginning, the grateful sentiments of the town for the gracious manner in which his Majesty has been pleased to interest himself for the welfare of its commerce, but at the same time expresses his alarms lest the King of Prussia, seeing he has no reason to apprehend a rupture with us, should not only refuse desisting from the rights he has hitherto claimed, but even carry them to still greater lengths. He next (after having described the various evils which would result to the commerce of Europe in general, and to that

of England in particular, by the King of Prussia being in possession of the trade of Poland) attempts to prove that they would not be sufficiently obviated by the town's acceding to an accommodation with that Monarch, after any of the three modes we have suggested to them. That their admitting him into a share of their duties would not only be a tacit acknowledgment of his right, but also tend to introduce that destructive system of commerce which his Prussian Majesty has adopted, and which has no other object than that of enriching the sovereign at the expense of the trader. He ventures to send a plan of accommodation between the King of Prussia and the town, which is enclosed in Mr. Corry's letter; and concludes with saying that the Magistracy have nothing more at heart than, through the mediation of our Court, to come to some fair agreement with his Prussian Majesty providing their rights are fully assured them, and they are not obliged to deviate from the fidelity they owe his Polish Majesty. I own, my Lord, that I am sorry to find that the Magistrates hesitate following your Lordship's salutary advice, while they yet have it in their power to negociate with his Prussian Majesty with a favourable prospect, and the orders he had given for the stopping his works at the Fahrwasser,* and no longer collecting duties or portcharges there, appear as if he was at this movement not ill-disposed towards them. Most of their objections appear to me to be easily answered, and their apprehensions of his Prussian Majesty breaking through his engagements are, in fact, none at all, since the very essence of an accommodation implies a reciprocal guarantee. The delay they desire will, I am afraid, expose them to fresh evils, as General Lentulus has in-

* A canal which he had seized, as well as other posts commanding the Port and City of Dantzick.

sinuated, that if their arrangement is not concluded before the assembling of the Diet, their affairs will then be finally settled in common with those of the Republic of Poland.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 24th April, 1773.

ALTHOUGH the Diet will be very thin of nuncios, yet the three powers seem determined on its meeting, and carrying, at all events, their plan into execution. I am assured that there are only ninety returned from the Dietines, and those mostly for such places as fell under the direction of the Prussian troops; the Palatinates of Podolia, Volhynia, Lublin, the Ukraine, and the greatest part of the south-east of Poland, have entered a formal protest, setting forth the illegality of a Diet to be held under the influence of three foreign armies.

The King of Prussia has ordered General Lentulus to instruct the leading priests and superior officers of justice, in their several districts, to declare the Bishop of Cracow to be *out of his senses, and to warn such as have any connexions with him to be aware of the effects of his insanity.*

Your Lordship will perceive, by the inclosed letter from Dantzic, how little necessary it was for the Magistrates of that town to wait for the answer of the King of Poland; and I am afraid their procrastination will cost them dear. Count Ivan Golofkin, who had a commission from the Empress of Russia to go to Dantzic and settle the affairs of that town there, has received counter orders; and I am assured that their interests are to be discussed and determined on at Petersburg,

between Count Solms and M. De Panin, or even in the Diet now assembled at Warsaw.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 1st May, 1773.

AN edict has lately appeared in his Prussian Majesty's new acquisitions in Poland, ordering such Jews as have not one thousand crowns capital, or upwards, immediately to leave the country. This has occasioned great distress among that people, and I am informed a formal deputation will be sent here, praying his Prussian Majesty to suspend this edict, as, if put in execution, it will tend to the ruin of numberless Jewish families.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 25th May, 1773.

I AM now confirmed in what I wrote to your Lordship, relative to the transactions of the Diet. His Polish Majesty has made his last struggle, and the delegation appointed being totally devoted to the interests of the three Courts, we shall hear of little or no further disturbance from that quarter. I have, however, some reasons for believing, that the Court of Vienna does not in everything accede to the projects of his Prussian Majesty, and that the Empress Queen opposes, contrary to expectation, any further extension of the dismemberment of Poland. I am likewise informed, that on this occasion, some rather high words passed between the two Courts, and though at present, by the King of Prussia's having withdrawn his pretentions, all things

apparently remain as they were, yet that some traces of ill blood are left behind, and that the unnatural cordiality does no longer subsist with the same warmth between the two Courts.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 10th July, 1773.

I HAVE good reason for believing that the last audience Mons. de Swicten had with his Prussian Majesty was to communicate to him a design of his Court, of augmenting their acquisitions in Poland, and of extending them towards the Kaminiec, on the north-east side the Dniester, into the Palatinates of Brahilow and Podolia. His Prussian Majesty came with great cordiality into the plan, treated Mons. de Swieten in the most gracious manner, and acquainted him, on his side, that he also intended adding to his Polish dominions that tract of land lying between Thorn and the Netze, which makes part of the Palatinates of Posen, Calish, and Cujavia. Mons. de Swieten was authorized to consent, in the name of his Court, to this proposition, and the audience ended with the strongest asssurances of friendship and good harmony. I do not hear whether Russia has been consulted on this occasion, or whether she is also to be aggrandized, at the expense of Poland.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 11th Sept. 1773.

MY LORD,—His Prussian Majesty during his stay in Silesia, after having made particular inquiries into the conduct

of Madame de Maltzhan, stopped all proceedings relative to the divorce, which were already pretty far advanced; ordered Mons. de Slabrendorff to the citadel of Breslaw, and her to be confined to a small habitation in the country, under the care of an elderly lady. He likewise ordered her children to be taken from her, and to be put into the hands of Monsieur Maltzahn's relations. This is the single instance of his Prussian Majesty's interfering in matters of this kind, and it is thought to be owing to a representation coming from the husband, who, if his wife's fortune went out of the family, would be reduced to the greatest extremity.

I have &c.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 23rd Oct. 1773.

If his Prussian Majesty is in earnest in his wishes for peace,* the restoration of Mons. de Panin to his full power will greatly facilitate the means of effectuating it. This event, I am told, was brought about by Count Solms, and confirms me in the opinion that I long have had, that his Prussian Majesty, economical as he is, besides the subsidy known to be paid to Petersburg, employs very considerable sums in his negociations at that Court. He probably now will hear no more of the demand for men, and as Mons. de Panin is quite his creature, will guide the Czarina's councils more despotically than ever, notwithstanding the fair prospect he has on that side, and no appearance of a misintelligence with the Court of Vienna. He is more assiduous than ever in his attention to the military, at least, as far as regards that part of it which comes within the circle of my observation. The garrison of this town are daily exercised, and the

* Between Russia and Turkey.

artillery still go out every day, though nominally they were dismissed towards the middle of September. In his new acquisitions he is raising recruits by every kind of means, and pays much less attention to the size than usual.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 7th Dec. 1773.

General Lentulus returned from Warsaw, and was received graciously, a few days ago at Potzdam, I am told, although I do not vouch for it as authentic, that his Prussian Majesty assured him that he was so well satisfied with the manner in which he had conducted his affairs, that he would soon employ him again on the same errand. The Prussian troops retire but slowly, and I believe will undoubtedly take up their winter quarters in the republic of Poland. If any conclusions might be drawn from the external behaviour of his Prussian Majesty, his attention is at this moment taken up with some great object. He lives more alone than ever, shortens the duration of his meals (the only moment of relaxation he allows himself,) is less talkative at them than usual, and passes whole days in his closet. I am assured that the private correspondence between him and the Czarina, which for a while appeared to flag, is now renewed in its full force ; and as Count Goertz is a person in whom his Prussian Majesty places some confidence, and as he has, I believe with reason, the character of an intriguing, enterprising man, I by no means think it impossible that he is charged with some more important commission than that of returning a mere Court compliment. These ideas lead me to what I have more than once taken the liberty

of writing to your Lordship, and although I submit them entirely to your superior judgment, I cannot avoid again mentioning my suspicions, that when the Turkish war is ended, an event at this period not entirely improbable, we shall see the same scene acted with the same concord, though perhaps not with the same facility towards Sweden, as we lately have been witnesses of towards Poland. I cannot pretend to say how far this may be compatible with the interests of the Court of Vienna, or whether the other two will endeavour to alleviate all difficulties coming from that quarter, by allowing the Emperor to extend his new acquisitions, or to augment his frontiers on the side of Turkey.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 25th December, 1773.

My Lord,—His Prussian Majesty, notwithstanding his appearance of health, finds himself, in fact, greatly indisposed. He has inward pains flying about him the whole day, which constantly, towards the evening, fix themselves in his stomach; symptoms which menace an irregular attack of the gout; an event he dreads so much at this season, that, contrary to his usual manner of living, he takes every precaution temperance and sobriety can afford, to avoid it. He rides a great deal on horseback, endeavours to promote a constant perspiration, and sometimes carries this to such lengths as to reduce himself to a state of excessive weakness. His treasure is by no means so great as is imagined. He has expended within these few years immense sums to encourage agriculture and population in different parts of his dominions, and has been ridiculously profuse in his commercial projects,

a branch he understands so little, and where he is so grossly deceived, that none of them have answered, or are likely to answer; that particularly of the Maritime Company, established in November, 1772, has failed in every point. The projectors, however, in order to obtain more money, amuse him with the most palpable falsehoods. They pretend, and make him believe, that the consumption of salt in Poland amounts yearly to 20,000 lasts, and that the Poles must necessarily take the whole of this article from him alone, since the Austrians will be obliged to send their salt into Hungary, where the pits are under water, a fact as notoriously false as the calculation is erroneous, since it is well known that the consumption of salt in Poland does not exceed 10,000 lasts. His great object, in regard to his interior political system, seems to be that of putting his kingdom in such a position, that his successor, at his death, in order to maintain it on the same footing, will be obliged to live with the same economy as himself. It is for this reason that he wilfully diminishes his treasure, being apprehensive that from the love of pleasure, which he knows predominates in the character of his nephew, it would be exhausted in luxury and amusement. His foreign system is much less indefinite, and embraces everything an active mind elated with prosperity can suggest, or a powerful army accomplish. His views, I am convinced, rove from one side of the Continent to the other, and as long as he has the means in his hands, no alliance however close, no convention however sacred, will be able to place bounds to his ambition. Without counting the encroachments on the suburbs of Dantzic, and the extortions he has exacted there, he has added a tract of Poland over and above what was given him by the treaty of 18th September, containing near 40,000 inhabitants, and producing a

proportionate revenue. He obtained the consent of Vienna on this occasion by allowing Brody to be brought within the limits of her new acquisitions. In regard to Russia, he disapproves greatly the expense of that Court in presents and ostentation, and recommends strongly peace, in order to withdraw the subsidy of 600,000 crowns he is obliged to pay as long as the Turkish war lasts. His ill-humour towards our Court subsists in its full force, and he talks of and treats that of France with the greatest contempt. Nothing remarkable has passed between him and his brother Henry since his arrival. He behaves to him in public with the same attention as usual, and I do not hear that in private he has mentioned his name.

I have &c.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 29th Oct. 1773.

I SHALL take an opportunity of expressing to Count Finckenstein the instructions conveyed in your Lordship's despatch* ; although I confess I do not expect that his Prussian Majesty will ever be induced to issue such a general and decisive order as your Lordship very justly suggests, or even enforce properly those contained in his edict of 11th May. He is undoubtedly ambitious of becoming a commercial power, and at intervals is convinced that this never can be, without previously encouraging trade, by taking off those fetters with which it is universally clogged throughout his dominions ; at the same time, however, he never will be able to persuade

* Referring to Dantzic.

himself to forego the petty advantages which he obtains from these restrictions, and from the chicanery with which its officers execute them. Immediate gain, however small, will always preponderate with him. His principles on this subject are so extremely false, so exceedingly narrow, that I am convinced the result of his great acquisitions of coast, and numerous sea-ports, will only prove a detriment to others, without ever being of any real benefit to himself. Every commercial enterprize, from the beginning of his reign till this day, has universally failed, and the last of any importance established in the month of October 1772, under the name of "*Campagnie Maritime*," which really carried with it at the beginning some kind of plausibility, is now at so low an ebb, that he has been obliged to send Commissioners from hence to Marienwerder, where its principal deposits are, to examine into the state of its credit, and to see whether he should be able to recover the capital he advanced towards its promotion. His mind, notwithstanding, will ever be restless on these subjects. As he finds none of his old projects answer, he always is ready to adopt new ones, and the remaining years of his reign, like those already passed, will produce a series of commercial edicts, specious, perhaps, in theory, impossible in practice, and contradictory to each other. As long as the source of the evil exists, the evil itself must exist; and this never will be remedied till such time as his Prussian Majesty's sentiments on finances and pecuniary matters become liberal and enlarged.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, Saturday, 29th Oct. 1774.

My Lord,—The Courier which the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires received last week, related solely to the final determination of the Polish limits. The plan was entirely concluded before M. de Swieter's departure, and this messenger merely brought the approbation of the Empress Queen. His Prussian Majesty sent it immediately by one of his chasseurs to Petersburg, more by way of communication than with a view of asking the opinion of that Court, since I am assured, and believe it an undoubted fact, that the Czarina, after having in vain endeavoured to moderate the demands of her two allies, has declared that she herself is resolved to abide by the limits prescribed in the original Treaty of Partition made at Petersburg, and to leave them to settle their frontiers in the manner they think proper. The original idea of this Court, as well as of that of Vienna, was, to send one of their chief Ministers for this purpose into Poland with full powers; but, on reflection, his Prussian Majesty objected to this, from the perpetual complaints to which such a Minister would be liable, and to which from the nature of his commission, he necessarily must attend. He proposed, rather, the sending the three inferior Commissioners, who should act in consequence of their instructions, and refer all doubtful cases to this their chief, having vested in themselves limited powers. This scheme has been adopted, and Mr. Coccej, one of his Prussian Majesty's aides-de-camp, General Lossou, and Mons. de Brinckenhoff, are actually either there or on the road. They are to give an account of their operations to Mr. de Hertsberg, the Minister at the head of the Commission, who is to reduce the whole to the form of a

memorial, to be presented by Benoit to the delegation, and afterwards to the Diet. I cannot speak with certainty of the extent of country the Court of Vienna pretends to add to its original share. His Prussian Majesty makes the Netze his boundary, from its junction to the Warta, to its source, from whence your Lordship, on comparing, will find he obtains a large tract of territory, containing the famous lake of Goblo, the palatinates of Inowroclowiez and Brescia, and almost all the district of Cujavia, west of the Vistula. The delegation, probably, will make no opposition, and the Diet and his Polish Majesty a very feeble one, to this fresh usurpation of their territories; and as now the several Courts appear to have their respective views fulfilled, there is reason to believe that this affair once settled, that unfortunate Republic, after an interrupted series of discord, troubles, and disgraces, for nearly ten years, in which it has lost its liberty, its finest provinces, and all its consideration in the affairs of Europe, will be left quietly to reflect on its misfortunes, and from its insignificance be unmolested.

I have, &c. JAS. HARRIS.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Berlin, Saturday, 12th November, 1774.

MY LORD,—I spare no pains to get the most accurate information relative to the present state of his Prussian Majesty's health; and, from as good intelligence as it is in my power to procure, I have reason to believe that the severe illness with which he was afflicted last April, contrary to common report, and directly opposite to the idea he wishes to propagate, has so far shaken his constitution as to make him very uneasy. The constant nocturnal

perspirations to which he has been subject from the earliest period of his life, and which he has always found highly beneficial to his health, now sometimes fail entirely, and are generally less profuse. He sleeps ill, and his spirits are dejected; the dread, however, he has that any of those about him should perceive him breaking overcomes every other consideration, and he increases his illness by the pains he takes to conceal it. He has, under pretence of introducing inoculation, invited Baylis, an English physician settled at Dresden, to reside for some time at Berlin. He is expected to-morrow, and I have the best reason for believing that at this present moment his Prussian Majesty is consulting him at Potzdam in the most private manner. The peevish and even childish anger he expressed this summer against his successor, was more owing to his being apprehensive of soon making room for him, than from any real motive of complaint against that Prince, whose conduct, not being different from what it always had been, could not, of course, have furnished any new reasons of disapprobation. His Prussian Majesty has since felt that he unmasked himself too much, and affects not only being entirely reconciled, but behaves with more attention than before to his nephew. The precipitancy, however, with which his favourite mistress was obliged to fly to Hamburgh, although she is now returned; the prohibition of masquerades, and the banishment of his merry companions, are events which dwell so deeply on his mind, as to make him wish the demise of his uncle with more eagerness than ever.

I have, &c. JAS. HARRIS.

PRIVATE LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, Dec. 15th, 1774.

MR. PORTER, a member of the British factory at St. Petersburg, affords me the first opportunity which has offered itself of acquainting your Lordship, by a safe conveyance, with what has passed subsequent to my arrival, relative to the desire the Crown Prince* expressed of being assisted by his Majesty. I had a very early visit from the person the most in his Royal Highness's confidence, and from the eagerness of his questions, I found his hopes were much raised.

In my answer, I carefully avoided committing either his Majesty or his Ministers, and contented myself with saying, that the carrying into execution a transaction of that kind appeared to me to be so very hazardous, as well from the suspicious vigilance of his Prussian Majesty, as from the number of persons to whom the secret must necessarily be entrusted, that on his Royal Highness's account solely, I had taken upon myself to make no mention of the affair, since I should be very unworthy of the confidence he had placed in me were I to expose him to the fatal consequences of a discovery. His agent appeared greatly disappointed, and, with a warmth approaching anger, condemned, in very harsh terms, my over prudence and timidity; said I had let slip the most favourable opportunity of cementing the surest future union between the two Courts; that the Prince had so firmly relied on my success, and was so pleased with receiving assistance from a Court unconnected with his uncle, that he had neglected taking any other precaution, "et qu'il n'auroit pas de quoi payer sa blanchisseuse;"

* Frederick the Great's nephew and heir, and afterwards King of Prussia.

that he would, perhaps, now repent the having repeatedly rejected the insinuations coming from France; that he was French only in his manners, not in his principles, and that disposed as he was already towards us, this supply, coming at a moment when necessity would have so enhanced the obligation, would have made him ours for ever. As he spoke with a most impetuous vivacity, I have no doubt that he was in earnest in what he said, and as I had no sort of reason to be discomposed with his disapprobation of my conduct, I thought it a favourable opportunity of getting some further lights into the Prince of Prussia's real character and connexions; I therefore, without affecting to justify myself, endeavoured to make him speak more freely, by suggesting different methods of obtaining the succours required, and hinted that Holland, Vienna, and Petersburg, were certainly at his disposition. His answer was, "Que le Prince d'Orange n'avoit pas le sou, que l'Empereur n'avoit pas la Bourse, que l'Impératrice Reine ne donneroit qu'aux Eglises, et que l'Impératrice de Russie le dénonceroit tout se suite à son oncle." I then mentioned the rich merchants, as well those of this country as strangers. "Il les a tous épuisés, il doit 300,000 écus (15,000*l.*), ici et autant dans l'Etranger." I ventured to hint that this sum appeared to me incredible, considering the very small ostensible expense of his Royal Highness. "Il a tout mangé chez les filles, il en à une qui lui conte 30,000 écus par an, et l'argent qu'il lui faut pour gagner les espions de son oncle monte encore à autant. Vous ne sauriez croire combien de fois jai pris la liberté de lui représenter combien peu sa façon de vivre convenoit a un grand Prince, mais son penchant pour le plaisir est trop décidé, il n'en reviendra jamais, cela augmente journellement, et la manière dont son oncle le traite, à tant aigri son esprit, que s'il vit

encore cinq ans, son charactère changera entièrement. ' Par Dieu dit il si vous nous aviez procuré vingt mille livres sterlings comme Prince, nous l'aurions mieux aimé que £7500. comme Roi.'" I told him I most sincerely wished he had it; that I flattered myself that, on representing my conduct impartially to the Prince, his Royal Highness would at least do me the justice to believe my intentions were good. This was our first conference, which happened towards the beginning of November. About a fortnight afterwards, the same gentleman returned, but with a very different language. He thanked me, in the name of the Prince, for my discretion; said that his Royal Highness's sentiments towards us were still the same; that he considered himself as personally obliged to me, for not having taken amiss what zeal for his master had made him say; that he hoped I had forgotten and forgiven it. I assured him, with very great sincerity, that it had not given me the least uneasiness; that I was exceedingly happy his Royal Highness saw my conduct in its true light. This, my Lord, is what has passed on this subject, which I communicate to your Lordship from the conviction I have that I never can write to you too confidentially; I have only to add, that I have since heard that the Prince of Prussia has applied through his Princess to the Grand Duchess of Russia, and that he expects to be relieved from that quarter. This accounts for the change of style in our second conference.

P.S.—I send this letter under cover to Mr. Serle, my agent, who will himself deliver it at your house.

BERLIN.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 14th Jan. 1775.

NOTWITHSTANDING the critical situation of the affairs in the empire, and the coolness which begins to manifest itself between this Court and that of Petersburg, I do not conceive that we are likely to see an early disunion between the three formidable allies, because I am persuaded his Prussian Majesty is too good a politician not to perceive that the preponderance this alliance gives him, can alone facilitate any future projects his ambitious genius may suggest, or even maintain him in the high rank he at present enjoys amongst the European powers. Prepared as his army and coffers are for war, he feels that his own bodily strength is inadequate to the fatigues of a campaign; and I am convinced he never will draw the sword but defensively, or with a moral certainty of success. He considers the situation of the Czarina as very precarious, as well from the character of her subjects, as from the restless, authoritative temper of the present dictator* of that Court. This, perhaps, induces him to be less guarded in his conduct towards that quarter than usual. I am at the same time, however, convinced that if he saw a probability of a defection, he would spare no pains to prevent the Czarina from emancipating herself from his alliance. Whether she can venture, or even wishes to emancipate herself, I cannot pretend to say. It is, indeed, indisputable, that since the peace, her councils seem to be less tainted with Prussian infection than before.

* Prince Orlow.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS, TO WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ.

Berlin, 21st Jan. 1775.

SIR,—Mons. de Borcke,* you already know, succeeds the Baron Kniphausen in the post this gentleman thought proper to fling up with a good deal of vivacity. He expected, I believe, from his talents and connections, that, instead of granting him his dismission, his Prussian Majesty would have endeavoured to appease him by promoting him to the rank of *Ministre d'Etat;* instead of this, he not only received his *congé* very readily, but was also deprived of a pension of six hundred crowns his Prussian Majesty gave him on his return from London.

Mons. de Borcke is a man of parts. His lady was well known at Dresden by the name of Madame Vatel. She is not of the most illustrious extraction; and it is somewhat singular, that, after having been forced on the Court of Saxony, she is not admitted to appear at this. Her lamentations on this account are very loud, as she brought with her an immense quantity of rich apparel, and an excellent disposition to efface our beauties of Berlin. These now show the excellence of their hearts, by making her frequent visits, and condoling with her on her affliction.

Mons. d'Armin, successor to Mons. de Borcke, at Dresden, has, besides the order of Danneberg, received from his Prussian Majesty a magnificent present. The ostensible reason for his soliciting his recal was, the humidity and coolness of the climate of Copenhagen. On his being admitted to an audience here, on his return, his Prussian Majesty, after having questioned him a good deal about the effect the damp had on his nerves, pro-

* Previously Minister at the Court of Saxony.

duced from under his hat, a box carefully packed up, saying, "Je ne veux pas que l'Etat perde un sujet aussi utile que vous; vous trouverez là dedans de quoi vous réchauffer."

Arnim, you may guess, was very eager to open his box, and was not a little disappointed in finding it filled with cotton. The next day, however, he was somewhat comforted, by an order to receive an augmentation of a thousand crowns to his salary.

Mons. de Swieten is not yet set out from Vienna; I am satisfied, however, this delay is merely occasioned by his private affairs, and not from any coolness subsisting, or likely to subsist, between the two Courts. They certainly see with a jealous eye their reciprocal aggrandisement; but they feel too much advantage in being well together to give way to this sentiment.

Mons. de Lauzun* is still at Berlin. The King has been remarkably civil to him, and I own, should Mons. de Pons not return, I should not be surprised, however singular it may appear, if he was to be named Minister at this Court.

I received very great pleasure from your kind letter of the 6th instant, and set the highest value on your friendship; not ministerially or politically, but from that kind of esteem which arises from an uninterrupted confidential acquaintance, begun in the early period of our lives.

* The famous *roué* Lauzun, who was afterwards guillotined at the French Revolution.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 7th March, 1775.

My accounts from Potzdam mention that his Prussian Majesty was never, at any one period of his life, known to be so uncommonly out of humour as at present. This appears not only from his conversation, but from his actions. He broke his flute, a few days ago, on the head of his favourite hussar, and is very liberal in kicking and cuffing those employed about his person. He is peevish at his meals, says little in his evening conversations, and is affable to nobody. His spirits seem likewise dejected, and although he affects to attend to business with as much ardour as usual, it is evident to those who see him constantly, that he sets about it with less alacrity. His health, which still continues as I described it to your Lordship, has a great influence, undoubtedly, on his temper; but I am told that the bad state of his *Compagnie Maritime* contributes not a little to his present ill-humour. This was a favourite commercial project of his, and he was so convinced of its success, that he engaged himself, more solemnly than he generally does on these occasions, for the payment of both the interest and capital to the adventurers in this scheme. Its having now failed, without a probability of redemption, exposes to the world not only his want of judgment in matters of trade, but, what will probably affect him more, lays him under a necessity, even supposing he puts an end to this association immediately, of making good a deficiency of near 100,000*l* and which sum will undoubtedly increase if he listens to the chimerical ideas given him of continuing it.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ.

Berlin, Saturday, 11th March, 1775.

SIR,—I hear various strange reasons alleged for the present uncommon peevishness of his Prussian Majesty's temper. Amongst several other incredible foibles in so great a character, he has that of not entirely disbelieving judicial astrology; and I am told, from one whose authority is not despicable, that the apprehension of a prediction pronounced by a Saxon fortune-teller his Majesty was weak enough some time ago to consult being this year fulfilled, dwells on his mind, and augments the sourness of a disposition naturally crabbed. It will be unfortunate for his subjects if these kind of fears increase, as he will necessarily become suspicious and cruel, and be what hitherto he never has been, a tyrant *en détail*. I should have paid no attention to these reports, which savour so much of the nursery, had I not myself observed him displeased at a mourning coat at his levee, and seen him visibly alter his countenance on being informed of any man's dying a sudden death. These sensations so clearly indicate a superstitious turn, that, although I do not vouch for the exact truth of my Saxon conjuror, yet the story appears sufficiently probable, at least, to become a matter of curiosity. He is not the first great man, or first free-thinker, who has been troubled with these fears, and history furnishes several apologies, (if examples are such,) for his weakness.

It is impossible to describe to you the pecuniary distress of his nephew. On the death of his late Marshal, there was a debt on the kitchen establishment of 15,000*l.* and on the others in proportion. No one would accept of a post in a Court so circumstanced, and after having

been rejected by as many as could be found calculated for it, it was forced on Monsieur d'Arnstedt, a man of worth and honour, but who had no other subsistence than a pension of five hundred crowns. The debts his Royal Highness has contracted for his extraordinary expenses surpass all imagination. His credit is entirely exhausted, and this, joined to the state of subjection in which he lives, affects, in a very sensible manner, his spirits; and, as if fortune was never tired of persecuting him, his impetuosity during the carnival has led him into a scrape, the unpleasing effects of which he still feels, and from which, probably, he will not be so soon free, as his uncle, maliciously perhaps, obliges him to attend his military duties with more severity than usual. The Bishop of Warmia was last year in the same situation, and his Prussian Majesty very nearly vacated the See by forcing him to partake of the high meats at his table, and dosing him with Hungarian wine, of which, as a Pole, his Majesty said he was, doubtless, both a judge, and fond.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

11th March, 1775.

Prince Orlow * has been received both here and at Potzdam with peculiar marks of distinction. Sentinels are placed at his door, and the guard is ordered to turn out, drums beating, every time he passes. He dined with his Prussian Majesty on Thursday, who augmented the number of dishes in each course from twelve to twenty-four; and, which he never did before, ordered to be served

* The favourite of the Empress Catherine and, at this time in the zenith of his power, having distinguished himself in the Turkish war.

a magnificent dessert. The same attentions have been mimicked at Berlin. The Queen, who never admits strangers to her table, asked him to supper, which, however, he declined, and the rest of the Royal Family, except Prince Henry, who is at Rhinesberg, vie with each other in shewing him civilities.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ.

Berlin, 27th June, 1775.

SIR,—His Prussian Majesty, since his return to Potzdam, has been a good deal shut up with his Ministers from hence, in examining their annual accounts and other interior regulations, with which, if one may judge from his liberality, he is perfectly satisfied. He has given to his sister, the Princess Amelia, 6000 crowns; 6000 to General Ramin, Governor of Berlin; 10,000 to the widow and children of the late General Krusmark; and made several less considerable presents. Some time back he sent 1000 crowns to the widow of Quintus Icilius,* told her he would purchase her husband's library at her own price, and promised to provide for her children.

We have at present here the famous Le Kain, who is considered at Paris in as high a light as Garrick. This alone is sufficient to insure him approbation here, and a very considerable share has been bestowed on him whenever he has made his appearance on the stage. I cannot give you a better idea of the judgment and taste of our audience than by telling you, that the first time Le Kain was announced in the bills, the whole house throughout a

* A nickname given to Guischard, a literary soldier whom Frederick made his butt.

whole act mistook and applauded very loudly another actor for him; an actor well known here, who had been justly condemned, and who, by appearing in a new character and different dress, obtained an honour to which he had not the smallest right.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Berlin, Saturday, 1st July, 1775.

My Lord,—The Prince of Prussia has nothing in his figure which denotes a person of superior talents or genius; tall and robust, without grace, he has more the air of a stout foot-soldier than that of a great Prince. Constrained and watched to a degree by his uncle, it is difficult to say whether silence and reserve are natural or acquired habits in him. It is certain these strongly characterize him, not only at Court, and before people of high rank, but even when he forgets he is a prince, and frequents lower company, which, through the pains he takes to be constantly in it, appears to amuse him; yet, even there, he never expresses his satisfaction otherwise than by encouraging his companions to be as loud and clamorous as possible, and to lay aside every respect due to him as their future sovereign. His favourite mistress, formerly a stage dancer, presides at these revels, and takes the lead in all the scenes of indecent mirth which pass there. She is large in her person, spirited in her looks, loose in her attire, and gives a true idea of a perfect bacchanalian. He is liberal to her to a degree, and she alone spends the full income he receives from the King. She makes, indeed, the best return in her power to such generosity; for at the same time she assures him

that he has the sole possession of her affections, she by no means exacts the same fidelity from him, but endeavours, as far as lays in her power, to satisfy his desires, whenever from fickleness or satiety they fix themselves on some new object; and in this profession she is so dexterous as never to suffer him to become acquainted with any woman who is likely to be her rival in the dominion she has over him. Her choice, and fortunately for her his, is generally among those of the lowest kind. The pursuit of these pleasures, the only ones for which he has any turn, employ the greatest part of his leisure; the rest of his time is spent either at the parade, in attendance on the King, or in dressing — an article in which, whenever he can venture to lay aside his uniform, he is refined and delicate to a degree. He is even at the expense of keeping a favourite *valet de chambre*, by name Espère en Dieu, constantly between Potzdam and Paris, for no other purpose than to give him the earliest information of any alteration in the fashions; and as Espère en Dieu collects his intelligence solely from his brethren (the hairdressers), so those who follow his instructions may very easily be mistaken for one of this class. Such, my Lord, are the outlines of his amusements, in which one may perceive more levity than vice, and even suppose, had he been fairly dealt with, his debauchery, which is now certainly of the lowest kind, would at least have taken a better turn, and deserved the name of gallantry. Distressed as he is for money, persecuted by his uncle, deprived entirely of the conversation of men of parts and probity, and surrounded by a set of debauched officers, it is not astonishing that he should have fallen into such a low style of libertinism; it would be much more so if, when he shall be called to the throne, he

ever gets the better of habits so long contracted, and gives up a way of life from which he appears to receive so great satisfaction.

I shall by the next post, speak to the more serious parts of his character.

FROM LORD GRANTHAM* TO MR. HARRIS.

Madrid, 20 July.

DEAR HARRIS,—Whether you have received a letter from this place last post or not, I have no doubt but you will be anxious to know the accounts received of the great armament, which has been making in this kingdom, at an enormous expense, ever since the beginning of February; and I am sure you will learn with much and with real concern how many of our acquaintances, and even friends, have suffered—though not fatally, by the event. To keep you no longer in suspense, you will learn that a very unsuccessful descent has been made at Algiers, that the troops were repulsed with so considerable a loss and disablement as upwards of 5,000 men. I scarce know of an officer who is not wounded, though most of them slightly. Fernan Nunez and Montejo but slightly; I mention them first as being those for whom you would feel most interest. I will now, as shortly as I can, tell you how the action past, and afterwards enter into some detail relative to such persons as you may have known. The fleet, consisting of 450 sail, and carrying above 40,000 men, sailed from Carthagena, and reached Algiers the 1st. inst. On the night of the 7th. the infantry, in two detachments of about 8,000 men each, landed; the first detachment

* Ambassador at Madrid.

advanced too eagerly, could not be supported to any purpose, and, after thirteen hours' engagement, all that could, regained the ships. But the loss of killed and wounded, first estimated at 3,000, certainly passes five if not six. The transports, with the army, are returned to Carthagena and Alicante. Some ships of war remained in the Bay of Algiers, and will soon either be recalled or reinforced; though I think it impossible that the first plan of attack should be kept up. I leave you to judge how deep an impression this severe failure makes here: how much discontent it creates, and how little effect this will have, if the General contrives to be approved of at Court. The Marquis de la Romana is killed. All the Generals, except Buck, wounded. The Walloons did wonders, but are cruelly handled. Hibernia is in the same case; among the wounded are O'Reilly, Ricardos, Assalto, Urbino, Navra, who covered the retreat with great ability; Villars, La Borde, Fernan Nunez, Montejo, Villena, Marquiz, Aranda's two former aides-de-camps—now O'Reilly's; twenty-eight officers of the Spanish guards; twelve out of seventeen engineers, &c. Pedro Silva and Luis Pignatelli have not been touched. Vaughan is, I hear, much wounded. In short, one is really afraid of asking after anybody. I fear Trieste is killed.

The Gazette published a bad, slight, absurd account—neither explaining the motives, nor justifying the event.

The Court is gone to San Ildefonso, where less will be said and heard than here. I have not time to write more, either in or out of cypher; so must take my leave for the present. Adieu, dear Harris; my brother desires his best compliments, and I am

Sincerely yours, GRANTHAM.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 25 July, 1775.

In these three successive letters I have endeavoured to give your Lordship a sketch of the Prince of Prussia's character, and, according to the best of my knowledge, have in no point deviated from the truth. On recapitulating them it appears, that there are in him no seeds of those great qualities, so necessary for one who is to inherit dominions like these, and undoubtedly the mass will be with great difficulty kept together if such qualities are to be sought for elsewhere than in the sovereign. Amongst a people formerly as famous for being honest as they are now for being totally destitute of every principle, and at all times dull to a proverb, few transcendent geniuses are likely to be found; and even if such a phenomenon should appear, his operations necessarily must be directed by interest and private views, since no true patriot can exist here. I have been told that the Prince of Prussia, aware of this, and at the same time diffident of his own abilities, is resolved, on the death of his uncle, to put his army entirely into the hands of Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, and to turn his own thoughts solely towards the administration of his finances and other civil occupations, and these, by observing the same manner now adopted, and by keeping the same men in place, he hopes to maintain on the same footing they now are. These resolutions are undoubtedly right; but how far a young prince, with strong passions, and who has passed the earliest period of his life under the greatest restraint, will be able to observe them, when he finds himself King without controul, and with a large treasure, is a matter of doubt.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ.

Berlin, 29th July, 1775.

SIR,—I feel I ought not to let this post go out without writing to you; yet I shall find it a very difficult matter to fill my paper.

Besides every branch of the Royal Family resident either here, or in the neighbourhood, we have at present in Berlin the Landgravine of Hesse Cassel and the Princess of Wirtemberg. His Prussian Majesty, after having entertained them royally at Potzdam during a week, sent part of his kitchen establishment to wait upon them here. He has appointed a Mons. Hoberg, one of his chamberlains, whose name was scarce known to him (and who, till now, never turned his thoughts beyond the purchasing a horse, or ploughing a field) as a temporary Comptroller of the Maîtres d'Hotel, and cooks employed on this occasion. In his first letter to him, which Mons. de Hoberg was with difficulty persuaded to be from the King—after an exordium in which he declaims against the roguery of servants in general, he enters into a very minute detail of the expenses of a table on such an occasion, prescribes the number, and even quality of each dish; enumerates the quantity and size of the wax candles, and leaves unnoticed no one single article likely to be wanted at such entertainments. So *great* is his Prussian Majesty, both in small and great affairs.

You are not ignorant that the great officers of his Court are merely titular, and never allowed to have any authority annexed to their office. This is given to some menial servants, who constantly are about his person; and his Treasurer was a hussar named Deiss, in whom his Prussian Majesty placed more confidence than he appears

to have deserved; since, for mal-administration, or some equally notorious fault, his Prussian Majesty a few days ago dismissed him from his high post, and ordered him to be employed as a drummer in a marching regiment. Deiss affected to submit patiently to his sentence, and on being arrested begged leave of the officer only to go into his room, adjoining to the King's writing-closet, to fetch his hat—this being granted, he immediately locked the door, took a pistol from his pocket, and shot himself through the head.

The King heard, and was alarmed by the report of a pistol so near him, and being told what had happened, he pitied Deiss, said he was out of his senses, and ordered all he died worth, to be distributed equally among his children. Deiss had charged the pistol with small shot, and crooked nails, and put the muzzle of it into his mouth.

His Prussian Majesty did not bestow on Le Kain the same extravagant praises that the public here lavish on him. He found him, as in fact he is, stiff and *outré*. He made him, however, on his departure, a handsome present, as also did Prince Henry, and the Prince of Prussia.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ.

Berlin, Saturday, 2nd September, 1775.

DEAR SIR,—Our Sister Princesses * have at length left us. They adopted a kind of system of procrastination, under pretence of family arrangements, but his Prussian Majesty entirely destroyed it, by fixing the day when the cooks whom he had sent from Potzdam to serve their

* The Dowager Queen of Sweden and the Duchess of Brunswick.

table, should cease working and return to their usual residence. He performed this manœuvre in the midst of the most polite speeches to their Royal Highnesses, and expressions of the deepest sorrow at their stay being so short.

I understand that towards the 15th of this month we may expect him here, to see whether the garrison is perfect in a new evolution he has lately taught them. I am not, *although in the militia*, sufficiently versed in military phrases to undertake to explain this evolution accurately.

Count Zierotin, the *Directeur des Spectacles* is dead. I cannot tell under what pretext his executors took it into their heads to ask of the foreign ministers their livery and equipages to attend his funeral. I took the liberty of refusing mine; as, besides the Count being a Roman Catholic, he was a *très mauvais sujet.*

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ.

Berlin, Tuesday, 19th September, 1775.

DEAR SIR,—His Prussian Majesty appeared perfectly satisfied with the garrison of this town at the review on Tuesday last. He gave out, that he intended lodging at his palace of Charlottenbourgh, but arrived the evening previous to the manœuvre at an insignificant village near the spot where the troops were to exercise, where he passed the night under a feigned name, and was not a little pleased to find the next morning everything in the most exact order, notwithstanding he arrived on the plain two hours sooner than he was expected.

You have heard of the famous General Zedlitz: he owed his fortune to an anecdote which came to my

knowledge only a few days ago. When simple Lieutenant, he happened to be near his Prussian Majesty on a bridge which crossed the Oder. The King asked him, if both the avenues of the bridge were possessed by the enemy, what he would do to disengage himself. Zedlitz without making an answer, immediately leaped his horse over the rails into the river, and, notwithstanding its breadth and rapidity, swam safe ashore. The King, who took it for granted he must be drowned, on seeing him come towards him said, "Monsieur le *Major*, je vous prie de ne plus faire de coups pareils."

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 7th Oct. 1775.

His Prussian Majesty's health is so far from being mended since I last wrote, that I am now positively assured that he has entreated the Electress of Saxony to defer her visit till the Carnival. It is, however, not in my power to enter into the particulars of his present indisposition, since he not only rejects all advice, but treated the surgeon who attended him from hence (a man of great skill and experience) in the most injurious manner, and even threatened him for venturing to differ from him in opinion. To his officers, and those of a superior class, who attend him in the routine of business, he is sullen and harsh; and it is with difficulty he keeps within bounds those bilious humours which overflow the moment he has to deal with his more menial domestics. He neglects his music and his books, and although he has replaced Quintus by the well known Abbé de Pau, he seldom suffers him to come near him. In a letter (which

was communicated to me under the strictest promise of secrecy) he wrote to his sister the Princess Amelia, the day previous to his gout, he complains so pathetically of his being forsaken by all the world, of his being without a friend, and makes use of such melancholy, not to say unmanly expressions, that if I was not certain he had not the most distant idea of its contents ever transpiring, I should suppose him to have written it with a view of answering some particular end.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Berlin, Tuesday, 17th Oct. 1775.

My Lord,—His Prussian Majesty recovers but slowly; the humours are now settled in his leg, and the surgeon has, by the advice of the physician, endeavoured to fix them there by a cautery. He is not well enough yet to do any kind of business. The *Commandant* at Potzdam gives out every morning the *parole;* and, what is a singular kind of farce, regularly acquaints the officers of the garrison, that his Prussian Majesty means to be present at the mounting of the guard, and as regularly, a moment before it takes place, informs them that his Majesty is prevented from coming that day by business of the greatest importance. No one at Potzdam ventures to inquire after his health. There reigns the most profound silence among every rank of people in that town; and no one but the surgeon, and a few menial servants, are allowed to approach Sans Souci.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO DANIEL DE LA VAL, ESQ. *

Berlin, 23rd Oct. 1775.

It is with pleasure I embrace an opportunity of renewing our correspondence, which has flagged on my side, for want of matter. The calm which has made my letters everywhere, for these last eight months, so very unedifying, seems now to be drawing towards an end; and I wish, in the course of next spring, a storm may not arise, whose effects will be felt in the remotest corners of Europe. Besides the ill state of health of his Prussian Majesty, which I tell you confidentially threatens him with a speedy dissolution, he seems to be losing ground both at Moscow and Vienna. The cloud, though perhaps only temporary, which at this moment covers his creature Count Panin, alarms him exceedingly; and the steps he supposes, and believes with reason, that other European princes are taking to open the Czarina's eyes, give him the greatest uneasiness; the more so, as the extravagant conduct, a total ignorance of commercial affairs, and a wanton persecution of the unfortunate town of Dantzic, expose him to a reproach, which even his most zealous partizans cannot pretend to palliate; this, joined to the broken state of his constitution, has so far ruffled his temper, naturally far from mild, as to make him at moments little inferior to a madman. He is suspicious of everybody, and is so unwilling to be thought out of order, that the efforts he makes to appear in health, very often endanger his life. On the other side, the Court of Vienna, having little to fear from him, and having possessed itself of the best share in the division of Poland, appears no longer anxious to keep up that strict harmony

* English minister at Copenhagen.

with Berlin; and, I believe, would be very ready to form a more natural alliance, if any such a one offered itself. Domestic events likewise torment him; his successor feeling that, according to the course of nature, he soon must become King, begins to anticipate himself, and treats his uncle with less respect and deference than he did formerly; his servants too betray him; his table companions ask their dismission; even his soldiers complain: in a word, every symptom that announces the end of a reign, which has been one continual scene of oppression, appears at present. Adieu! my dear Sir; let what I have written remain entirely between ourselves; you will always find me ready to write to you with the greatest confidence, and receive what you write me with strict secrecy.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ.

Berlin, November 14th, 1775.

DEAR SIR, — The hussar whom his Prussian Majesty had put about his person in the room of the unfortunate Deiss, was ordered, a few days ago, into confinement. He had written the following letter to his mistress:— "My dear Charlotte, it will not be in my power to call upon you either to-day or so soon as I could wish, being obliged to stay at home and take care of the old *Brumm Bär* (growling bear). I hope, however, towards the end of the week to make good this loss." This fatal letter fell into the King's hands. He immediately sent for his hussar, and asked him whether he could write. "A little," says the hussar. "Take a pen and write." He alleged his being little used to write. "It does not signify; write as well as you can what I dictate to you," and his Prussian Majesty immediately dictated to him

his letter to his mistress. The hussar fell on his knees and attempted to excuse himself. "Write on," says the King, and add, "My dear Charlotte, it is now probable several weeks will pass over before I can have the pleasure of seeing you, being obliged at this very moment to set out for Spandau." The King signed the letter, and sent him with it to prison, where, however, he let him stay no longer than was necessary to frighten him; his Prussian Majesty considering the fault in the ludicrous manner it deserved.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Berlin, 21st Nov. 1775.

YOUR nomination, which your Lordship mentions, to the post of *Ministre de Guerre*, seems to meet with uncommon approbation.

His Prussian Majesty is, however, in too ill a state of health to pay the same attendance he formerly did to every event which influences the affairs of Europe. But half recovered from a long, painful, and complicated sickness, his mind sympathises with his body, and with difficulty performs the functions indispensably necessary for keeping together the wonderful fabric he has erected. Unable to execute new projects of depredation, his sole object seems to be a wish to be unmolested in the possession he enjoys, and the maintaining in Europe the preponderance his fortune and conduct have annexed to his name. Conscious, perhaps, of the illegal tenure by which he holds them, and measuring the temper of other princes by his own, he, at length, feels the sentiments he has so often inspired. Full of alarms and suspicions, his measures seem all to tend to the discovery of the projects of

other Courts, without having any determined one of his own. He is uneasy at the intimacy between the Court of Versailles and that of Vienna, but much more so, at the advances the French Ministry appear to be making at Petersburg, and the perfect intelligence which reigns between them; and he is fully persuaded that he cannot depend on the House of Austria longer than their alliance is cemented by interested views, and that when those cease the old grudge will return in its full force. He is conscious too, that others may employ the same means to destroy his interest at Petersburg, by which he has formed it; and as he feels the absolute necessity not only of keeping well, but even of guiding the measures of the Czarina, he is resolved to spare no pains to counteract the negotiations of every power at that Court. It is for this end he has proposed a second journey to his brother, Prince Henry, to whom, besides unlimited promises, he has offered a very considerable present. Spain, Portugal, and Italy seldom occupy him further than a subject of raillery and table conversation; Denmark and Sweden are below his notice, and his dispositions towards us seem in every respect the same as they have been these last twelve years. Your Lordship may infer from this, that as long as his Prussian Majesty lives, there is as little danger of the tranquillity of Europe being disturbed in this quarter, as in that you inhabit; but as his health is universally allowed to be very precarious, and, if I may speak to your Lordship confidentially according to my own opinion, so impaired as to threaten even immediate danger, the system of the North may soon take an entire new turn, and afford a very ample field for political speculations.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 3rd Feb. 1776.

His Prussian Majesty is confined to his bed in consequence of the return of the gout, of which I acquainted your Lordship in my last. He has sent for a physician from hence he discarded several years ago, on his refusing to prescribe for his greyhound, by name Cuttenius, and has made ample reparation for his ill usage of him by the gracious reception he has given him. I can, at the same time, scarce suppose him to have any reliance on his skill, and consider this step, merely as that of a drowning person who catches at every branch. In the meanwhile the Prince of Prussia, passes four or five nights of the week here, and his German and French mistresses occupy him so exceedingly, as to divert his thoughts from any other object. The low scenes that pass between these two heroines are not of a nature to be communicated to your Lordship. The French lady excels in cunning and the art of pleasing, the other presumes on her long uninterrupted reign, which she maintains with threats and open force. His Prussian Majesty knows all this, and would willingly prevent it, but he feels that orders respecting one so near the throne, are not likely to be executed with that exactness he could wish.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 18th March, 1776.

The basis of his Prussian Majesty's conduct, from the time he mounted the throne, to this day, seems to have

been the considering mankind in general, and particularly those over whom he was destined to reign, as beings created merely to be subservient to his will, and conducive to the carrying into execution, whatever might tend to augment his power, and extend his dominions. Proceeding on these grounds, he has all along been guided by his own judgment alone, without ever consulting any of his Ministers or Superior Officers; not so much from the low opinion he entertains of their abilities, as from a conviction from his own feelings, that if he employed them otherwise than as simple instruments they would, in time, assume a will of their own; and, instead of remaining accessaries, endeavour to become principals. To persevere in this system, it was necessary for him to divest himself of compassion and remorse, of course of religion and morality. In the room of the first, he has substituted superstition; in the place of the latter, what is called in France, *Sentiment;* and from hence we may in some measure account for that motley composition of barbarity and humanity, which so strongly marks his character. I have seen him weep at a tragedy, known him pay as much care to a sick greyhound as a fond mother could to a favourite child, and yet, the next day, he has given orders for the devastating a province, or, by a wanton increase of taxes, made a whole district miserable; and, what will perhaps appear still more contradictory, contribute to his own brother's death, by continuing to him marks of his displeasure, the whole time of his last illness. Again, he is so far from being sanguinary, that he scarce ever suffers a criminal to be punished capitally unless for a most notorious offence; yet the last war, he gave secret orders to several of his army surgeons, rather to run the risk of a wounded soldier's dying, than by the amputation of a limb increase the

number and expenses of his *invalides*. Thus never losing sight of his object, he lays aside all feelings the moment that is concerned ; and, although as an individual he often appears and really is humane, benevolent, and friendly, yet the instant he acts in his Royal capacity, these attributes forsake him, and he carries with him desolation, misery, and persecution, wherever he goes. From an easy transposition of the same erroneous principle to the internal government of his dominions, we may see why he never can be taught to believe, that a large treasure lying dormant in his coffers impoverishes his kingdom ; that riches increase by circulation ; that trade cannot subsist without reciprocal profit ; that monopolies and exclusive grants put a stop to emulation, and of course to industry ; and, in short, that the real wealth of a Sovereign consists in the ease and affluence of his subjects. These errors, however capital they are, have rather served to augment the misery of these subjects, than impede the progress of his own grandeur. If he has failed in small points, resolution and cunning employed as the occasion required, and always supported by great abilities, have carried him with success through almost every important undertaking he has attempted. We have seen him end a war with almost all the great powers of Europe by an advantageous peace ; and since, we have seen him gain such an ascendancy over those who were his most natural enemies, as to make them contribute to the execution of his ambitious projects. His immense increase of revenue, the gigantic army he maintains, and the wonderful preponderance he bears in Europe, will, in future history, appear incredible. He found on his father's death, a revenue of 13,000,000 of crowns, a treasury of 16,000,000, no debts, and an army of 50,000 men ; and, at the time, this was reck-

oned as the greatest effort of economy. He has now an income of 21,000,000 of crowns, three times that sum at least in his coffers, and near 200,000 effective men. He undoubtedly owes this, in great measure, to his superior talents; yet I think we may find another cause, in the character and position of his subjects; in general they are poor, vain, ignorant, and destitute of principle; had they been rich, his nobility could never have been brought to serve as subaltern officers, with zeal and ardour. Their vanity makes them think they see their own greatness in the greatness of their Monarch. Their ignorance stifles in them every notion of liberty and opposition, and their want of principle makes them ready instruments to execute any orders they may receive, without considering whether they are founded on equity or not. His Prussian Majesty has well known how to take advantage of this character by keeping them at a most awful distance. They consider a word or a smile from him as a boon; and, by never rewarding them according to their merits, they are taught to believe they have no merit at all. The superior endowments nature has given him over them, and the pre-eminence which he constantly affects, make them look up to him as a divinity; and, although they feel the rod of iron with which they are governed, yet few repine, and none venture to murmur. At those moments when he lays aside the Monarch, and indulges himself in every kind of debauchery, he never suffers the instruments or partakers of these excesses to have the smallest influence over him. Some few he has rewarded; discarded several, but left most of them in the same situation he found them. Having said thus much, it is perhaps less wonderful than it generally appears, that such a sovereign governing such a people, should have raised to so great a

pitch of glory, a country which, from its geographical position, its climate and its soil, seems to have been calculated to act a very secondary part amongst the European powers; and it is not very difficult to foresee, on its exchanging masters, that its preponderance will greatly sink; and, as this event is certainly not very distant, I hope I shall not trespass on your Lordship's time, in turning my thoughts for a moment to the future state of these dominions.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 13th April, 1776.

The King of Prussia acts as if he was superior to age and infirmities, continually forming new projects both at home and abroad. He never allows a moment's rest either to his subjects or his neighbours; the first are threatened with innovations in the modes of taxation, and what is still worse, with a royal mandate, obliging each landholder to give in an exact list of the nett produce of his estates, and of the share they contribute to the revenue. Abroad he is endeavouring to widen the breach between the Empress Queen and her son;* and, unless I am egregiously misinformed, expresses himself in very different terms to Mons. de Swieten here, and to the agents he has about the Emperor at Vienna. In Poland also he is exciting fresh troubles, and takes every advantage of the dissension at present reigning between the magnates of that country, to reduce it to such a state of anarchy, as to make a second Partition, his specific on these occasions, necessary. He laughs at the restitution the Court of Vienna has made of those

* Afterwards the Emperor Joseph.

tracts of land in Poland, not included in the Convention of Petersburg; and the conduct Mons. Benoit has orders to hold at Warsaw, is a mere copy of his countenance. His quarrel with Sweden is not yet over, and I am surprised he has borne with such patience the tardiness with which satisfaction is given him. His minister there has certainly acted like a beginner, and probably, in whatever way the affair may be settled, he will be recalled.

His Prussian Majesty's health has not materially varied since I last wrote.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 1st June, 1776.

SEVERAL couriers have been received in the course of this last fortnight from Prince Henry, and it was told me in the greatest confidence that the last who arrived at Potzdam, and met the King on the road, brought the Empress's entire consent and approbation of marrying the Grand Duke* to the Princess of Wirtemberg, at present promised to the Hereditary Prince of Hesse d'Armstadt, and that it is settled, that his Imperial Highness, under pretence of dissipating his grief, is either to return with or immediately to follow Prince Henry to Berlin. That the Princess will meet him here, and that the affair is then to be finally determined; this event is to take place towards the months of July or August, and orders are already given for the Opera singers to hold themselves in readiness for the occasion.

* Afterwards Paul, Emperor of Russia, who was assassinated.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ.

Berlin, 9th July, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—The courier, bringing the intelligence of the Grand Duke's departure from Petersburg, arrived here the day before yesterday; of course the idle reports of the journey being suspended, to which I never gave credit, are now entirely destroyed, and nothing but unforeseen accidents will prevent his Imperial Highness making his entry here towards the 21st instant. The commotion this unexpected visit makes in this place is beyond all description; the King himself having set an example of magnificence not heard of in this country since Frederick the First's time. His loyal subjects are vying with each other who shall be finest. Those whose finances do not allow them to bear a share in this competition, and whose credit is exhausted, pretext urgent business in the country, or occasional sickness; but every possessor of a few hundred crowns employs them in lace and embroidery. As His Prussian Majesty never gives out his definitive orders till the moment before they are to be put into execution, I cannot as yet send you an exact account of the festivities, or of the order in which they are to take place. The husband of the first singer of the Opera, Mr. Mara, formerly Mam^lle. Schmellin, having maliciously remarked at the rehearsal, that he believed that the composer of the music understood more of soldiery than of notes, and as this was not the first sarcasm of the kind he has been imprudent enough to deliver, was by Royal Command made over to the corps de garde, with strict instructions to correct him, and to take care for the future of such insolent behaviour; as no particular mode of punishment was specified, each soldier adopted that he chose. They began by putting him on a uniform, and a large pair of

whiskers, and obliging him with the heaviest firelock they could find, to learn for two hours his manual exercise, accompanying this lesson with all the usual discipline of the cane. They then made him dance and sing for two hours longer, and ended their persecution by forcing the surgeon to take from him a large quantity of blood. They, in this condition, restored him to his wife, who had, without success, endeavoured by the charms of her voice, to obtain from the officer on guard a mitigation of his punishment. I must, however, in justice add, that however cruel some parts of it may seem, and I have omitted a circumstance or two as absolutely unfit to be put upon paper, this man has been notoriously impertinent, and has been often treated with lenity.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 27th July, 1776.

THE Grand Duke of Russia arrived by dinner on Sunday at Weissensee, a village about three miles distant from hence. Several triumphal arches, with emblematical figures and inscriptions were erected there and on the road, and his Imperial Highness made his public entry into Berlin between six and seven o'clock in the evening. The different trading companies in their uniforms, the burghers, and capital merchants, opened the procession. The chariot in which was the Grand Duke and his Royal Highness Prince Henry of Prussia, was covered with silver, and drawn by eight beautiful horses. It was preceded by a troop of the body guards, and the march was closed by those of his Royal Highness's suite, and the equipages of the King and Royal Family. The same evening there was a grand concert and ball at court.

On Monday morning the Foreign Ministers and Nobility were presented to the Grand Duke, and in the evening there was a French play. On Tuesday, Prince Henry of Prussia, in the name of the Empress of Russia, made the demand of the Princess of Wirtemberg in marriage for the Grand Duke. In the evening there was a magnificent ball and supper in the great apartments of the palace. While the Royal Family were at table, a large piece of the fresco of the ceiling cracked, probably by the intense heat of the room, and fell in directly where the King of Prussia and Grand Duke were sitting; it occasioned a good deal of confusion, but not the smallest harm, and I should not have mentioned so trivial a circumstance were it not to prevent your Lordship being misled by any idle report which might exaggerate this accident, and of which even few of the spectators could prevail on themselves to give a faithful account.

On Wednesday there was a Court of Felicitation on the marriage at the Grand Duke's, and in the evening at the Princess of Wirtemburg's, and the day closed by the fine opera of Angelica and Medor.

Thursday, Prince Ferdinand of Prussia gave an elegant breakfast under a tent on the banks of the river, and in the evening there was a ridotto and supper at the Opera House, and yesterday his Imperial Highness, after having dined at Charlottenbourg, went to Potzdam, where he stays till Tuesday. How long he will remain here on his return I cannot say, probably not more than a week.

A great concourse of strangers of the first rank are here on this occasion, and the inhabitants of the country vie with each other in magnificence.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 27th July, 1776.

NOTHING can exceed the attention and even court His Prussian Majesty pays to the Grand Duke, nor the pains he takes to captivate and please him, in which I am convinced he has succeeded so well as to be able to make him subscribe implicitly to whatever he chooses. I have endeavoured to follow closely their interviews, and, as well from what I have seen myself as from what I have collected from others, I never heard of any man so endued with the gift of persuasion as his Prussian Majesty, nor of any one who knows how to employ it so opportunely. He treats the Marshal Romanzow with almost an equal distinction; and, if this general was disposed to be Prussian before this visit, I am satisfied that he is now as much so as the most faithful of his Prussian Majesty's subjects. He behaves in the same manner to the rest of the Russian visitors, and not one of them will return to Petersburg without being infatuated with his affability and goodness. In this properly consists the magnificence of their reception; for as to all that has made the subject of my uncyphered despatch, nothing can be conceived so trumpery and sordid. His Prussian Majesty knows this and laughs at it; sure, from his own reputation and from the minds on which he has to operate, that a smile from him will have more effect than the expending all the money in his coffers. Prince Henry, who looks upon himself as the author of this remarkable event, cannot contain his joy. It burst forth the other evening to a confidant of his, to whom he said, "Embrassez moi, c'est le plus beau jour de ma vie." I wish, my Lord, it was in my power to reason with any degree of plausibility on the political effects which will arise

from these reciprocal visits. It is clear to me, that the Court of Vienna was gaining ground at Petersburg, and that now they are worse there than ever. I form this conjecture, not merely from my intelligence from different quarters, but from the cold manner in which both the King of Prussia and the Grand Duke treat the Imperial Minister. The Grand Duke, on his being presented, took no notice of him at all; and, on seeing him the second time, asked me within hearing, as if he meant to mortify him, who he was. This is the more remarkable, as His Prussian Majesty all along expressed a personal regard for Mons. de Swieten, and always at his levee honoured him with a great share of his conversation.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 3rd August, 1776.

THE Grand Duke appears passionately fond of his future Grand Duchess. Her person, though rather inclined to be fat, is far from unpleasing, and great pains has been taken with her education. Nothing can equal the joy, both of her and all the House of Wirtemberg on this occasion.

I have been very attentive in observing the conduct of our great visitor towards the Prince of Prussia, and have reason to believe that His Prussian Majesty, suspecting that His Imperial Highness might have instructions to offer some pecuniary relief to his nephew, has prevented it taking place by hinting to the Grand Duke, that such a step would give him great displeasure. My conjecture arises from the rather illiberal terms in which his Royal Highness expressed himself to one of his merry

companions when talking of this Prince. It is somewhat singular, also, the Prince of Prussia is the only one of the Royal Family that is excluded in the invitation to Rhinsberg. This is severely felt, and Prince Henry may pay one day or other very dear for this neglect.

His Prussian Majesty does not bear the fatigues of the court so well as those of the field; he looks bloated and worn down, and is far from being so well as on the day of his arrival.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Berlin, 10th August, 1776.

THE Grand Duke's conduct here has by no means reconciled to him the good will either of the people or nobility. He received all the acts of homage they did him as if they were his due, and, at his levee, took not the smallest pains to be affable. His donations, too, are exceedingly below par; a disappointment the more felt as the ideas were raised very high here of Russian magnificence, and valuable presents as much expected as wanted. Marshal Romanzow spoke very freely to the Grand Duke on this subject; but whether His Imperial Highness is naturally economical, or whether he was limited by the Czarina, it produced no effect, except a great coolness between the Prince and his adviser. The King of Prussia has, on the other hand, been uncommonly liberal; his presents were, indeed, clumsy and void of taste, but heavy and covered with diamonds; and I am assured that if Prince Henry had not stayed his hand they would have been still more costly.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ.

Berlin, 13th August, 1776.

My dear Sir,—I am heartily glad our bustle is over; I have now leisure to write to you, and it has furnished me with materials to make my letter less insipid than usual. I forbore, in my official correspondence, giving a circumstantial account of our magnificence and splendour; not only from such festivities being much less delightful in description than in reality, but because I felt my pen would be greatly inferior, both in style and accuracy, to that of the Gazetteer *du bas Rhin*, and other Continental news writers. I must indeed do them the justice to say, that, on this occasion, they have been very exact; and, as far as regards the descriptive part of the ceremony, have scarce, in a single instance, deviated from the truth. I shall, therefore, not interfere in their department, but mention only such collateral facts as may have escaped their observation.

Paul Petrowitz were names, as you may observe, written on every triumphal arch. "That must be wrong," says a Mayor of a bourg in Pomerania, "the Grand Duke is certainly a gentleman, put Paul *Von* Petrowitz."

All the domestics belonging to the Imperial Family in Russia have military rank. The Grand Duke's coachman, and he of His Prussian Majesty, going one evening to drink together, a dispute arose about precedence. "What is your rank?" says the Prussian. "*Lieut.-Colonel*," replies the other. "Ah! but I am a *Colonel*," answers the German, and walks first into the ale-house. The fact came to the King's ears. The *Colonel* was sent for three days to prison, and received fifty *coups de canne*.

When the Grand Duke left Berlin, it rained and thundered. Canons were continually firing. A German poet, with an imagination bolder than that of the Frenchman, remarked, that angels joined their tears to those of the people for the departure of his Imperial Highness, and that Jove and Frederick accompanied him with their thunder.

His Majesty, having required Mr. Harris's attendance at home, he left Berlin the 19th September, 1776, and was soon after appointed to the Court of Catherine II. at Petersburg.

RUSSIA.

LETTER FROM THE KING OF PRUSSIA TO MR. HARRIS.

Potzdam, ce 3 d'Août, 1777.

M. LE CHEVALIER HARRIS,—C'est avec un plaisir bien sensible que j'apprends par votre lettre du 21 de Mars dernier, qu'à votre passage pour la Russie j'aurai encore la satisfaction de vous revoir ici. J'attends ce moment avec le plus vif empressement par une suite toute naturelle de mon estime pour votre mérite distingué. J'ai eu, il est vrai, la consolation de vous la donner à connoître pendant tout le temps que vous avez résidé à ma cour ; et elle a été le premier motif des regrets que j'ai manifestés à votre départ. Mais le destin vous ayant appellé ailleurs, il me sera au moins doux de vous renouveller encore une fois de bouche, que votre souvenir me sera toujours cher, et que dans l'éloignement même, je ne laisserai jamais de rendre à vos talents, et à vos vertus, la justice qui leur est due. Sur ce, je prie Dieu qu'il vous ait, M. le Chevalier Harris, en sa sainte et digne garde.

(Signé) FREDERIC.

MR. HARRIS TO MR. EDEN.

Kœnigsberg, Friday, December 3rd.

DEAR SIR,—As I happened not to be at Dantzic on a post day, I desired O'Trevor Corry to acquaint you with my motions as far as that place. We found the roads very bad before we got there, but they have been still worse since: for these last four days we have had one of our wheels in the Baltic, and, as there blew a very strong westerly wind, I was almost afraid sometimes we should be wrecked. One wheel thus placed, and the other in the deep sand, we have never advanced above twenty miles a day. Unfortunately we have neither frost or snow to afford us a better prospect as we proceed, and the weather is perversely fine and mild. I I still hope to be at St. Petersburg in a fortnight, although we have 700 miles to go. I have every reason for mentioning with satisfaction my reception at Dantzic. The magistrates separately, and in a body, were eager to shew their respect and attention to the character with which I am invested. Besides the customary present of wine, they offered me horses all the road I went through their territories; and, had I staid, would have constantly formed entertainments and diversions for myself and my ladies. Their orator was short, but expressive in his speech to me; my answer was still shorter, and did not contain a word they could misinterpret.

I visited the Fahrwasser, Lang Fuhr, and the other environs lately become Prussian. They hem in the town on every side. Mons. de la Coste, the collector of the revenues for his Prussian Majesty, thinks himself equal, both in his power and capacity, to his master; he is, however, vastly more like him in the first than in the last, since his dominion, as far as it extends, is absolute,

while his talents just afforded him instinct enough to leave Rotterdam at a very short notice. Sir Trevor Corry seems very intimate with him, and they appear to be on the best of terms.

As we went along the coast to-day, we passed by two wrecks, one a very fresh one, near enough for us to walk into and examine it; and off the harbour of Pillau, we saw a large vessel which was driven ashore last night, and not likely to be got off. The night before last we were lighted by a noble aurora borealis; the brightness of the waves which often washed our carriage, the immense extent of barren shore and sea this fine phenomenon discovered to us, made it a very romantic scene; it would have been more pleasing if our horses had not failed us, and forced us to lie in the sand till near one in the morning.

I shall, probably, not write any more till I can date from Petersburg, unless we should by any accident be detained on the road.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM THE EARL OF SUFFOLK TO MR. HARRIS.

St. James's, Jan. 9th, 1778.

Sir,—It made no part of your formal instructions at leaving England, to revive, on your arrival at Petersburg, those negotiations for an alliance between Great Britain and Russia, which so much occupied the attention of your predecessors, and which, I trust, it has ever been the sincere wish of the two Courts to accomplish. I soon discovered that Mons. Mouschkin Pouschkin, on his return to London, had nothing particular in charge upon this subject. And it is very probable that both Courts

were actuated by the same motives in their silence on this head to their respective Ministers; that both thought the general situation of affairs, respecting either country, was not sufficiently altered, to remove the impediments which have hitherto obstructed the conclusion of a treaty.

Mons. Mouschkin Pouschkin had left Petersburg before the Turkish business grew so extremely critical as it has since become, and your departure from hence took place before some grievous and unexpected successes, obtained by the Colonies, had given a degree of strength and consistency to their rebellion. The two kingdoms are now, therefore, under different circumstances to what they were some time ago, and so strongly are they connected together by natural ties, that the perfidious machinations played off against the one, are at the same time accompanied by similar practices against the other. To illustrate this remark, let me direct your attention to the conduct of France, who, according to her general plan of seeking indirect benefits to herself, by forwarding the embarrassments of others, will be found to divide her favours with equal cordiality, at least, if not with equal effect, between Great Britain and Russia. With regard to the former, she has gradually proceeded, from a mere connivance at the illicit commerce of our rebellious Colonies, to give encouragement to their visits, to admit their avowed agents, to suffer her ports in Europe and the West Indies to be made an asylum for their pifacies, to furnish money, arms, ammunition, and officers, for the support of the rebellion.

With regard to Russia, it is also notorious, that she is suffering under the influence of the same dark and malevolent spirit. French agents, in order to draw off her

attention from this side of Europe, and her natural interests, are inducing the Porte to violate the late treaty of peace, and are assuring the Turkish ministers, that in the event of a war, the Russian fleet shall be excluded from the Mediterranean—a resolution solemnly taken, and to be executed by France in conjunction with Spain, who, towards us also has pursued the same measures with France, though in a less extensive degree.

Such is the present situation of Great Britain and Russia with respect to the House of Bourbon, and it does not seem too much to say, that their *general* situation is sufficiently critical, to make this the proper moment of procuring mutual support, and reverting to the idea of an alliance with each other.

I have shortly stated the system of the House of Bourbon, as connected with the joint interests of his Majesty and the empress of Russia; but I must not omit to state the conduct of another principal power in Europe, which I do with concern, because I apprehend much embarrassment may arise from it to the object of this despatch. The King of Prussia, from motives known only within the cabinet of Potzdam, (unless, indeed, they have found a place in the correspondence, which there is much reason to believe he has actually had in his own handwriting with Messrs. Dean and Franklin,) takes the most unfriendly part.

From all these considerations thus detailed to you, I am by his Majesty's command to instruct you to take such methods as your experience in business, guided by the reception given to you at the Court of Petersburg, may induce you to prefer, to learn the sentiments of that Court on the present situation of Europe, and to discover how far there is any practicable disposition in the Em-

press of Russia and her ministers, towards forming an *Offensive and Defensive Alliance* with Great Britain.

If Russia turns a deaf ear to the consideration of an alliance now in the disposition of this country and the particular situation of both, I own I don't foresee the conjuncture when an alliance can be formed between us.

SUFFOLK.

THE following extracts from the Memoirs of Frederic the Great, written by himself, and published two years after his death at Berlin, explain the causes of his hostility towards Great Britain during the latter part of his reign.

(Avant-propos, page 7.)

La conduite de l'Angleterre sur la fin de la dernière guerre avoit rompu notre alliance avec elle. La paix séparée qu'elle fit avec la France, les négociations qu'elle entama avec la Russie pour me brouiller avec l'Empereur Pierre III.; les avances qu'elle avait faites à la cour de Vienne pour lui sacrifier mes intérêts; toutes ces infidélités ayant dissous les liens qui m'avoient uni à la Grande Bretagne, me laissoient après la paix générale isolé, et sans alliés en Europe.

(Mémoires, page 16.)

Lorsque le Sieur Pitt quitta le Ministère, sa place fut donnée à l'Ecossais Bute. Ce Ministre Anglais rompit toutes les liaisons qui subsistoient entre nos deux cours. L'Angleterre comme nous l'avons rapporté, ayant fait la paix avec la France, lui avoit sacrifié les intérêts de la Prusse, et avoit offert la conquête de la Silésie à la maison d'Autriche, pour renouveller à la faveur de ce service, les anciennes liaisons de la Cour Impériale avec celle d'An-

gleterre ; et comme si ce n'étoit pas assez de tous ces procédés, le Sieur Bute avoit mis tout en œuvre à Petersbourg pour brouiller le Roi avec l'Empereur Pierre III. ; en quoi cependant il ne put réussir. Tant de mauvaise foi avoit rompu tous les liens formés entre la Prusse et l'Angleterre ; à cette alliance que l'intérêt réciproque avoit produite, succéda l'inimitié la plus vive, et la haine la plus violente, de sorte que le Roi demeura seul sur le champ de bataille, sans à la vérité que personne ne l'attaqua, mais aussi sans que personne se présentat pour le défendre.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ.

* Petersburg, 5th, 16th January, 1778.

My dear Sir,—The impossibility of writing anything either entertaining or accurate immediately on my arrival on an entire new scene, has been the cause of my silence for some time past. I begin now to get my ideas in some order, and although I cannot pretend to send you an interesting or instructive letter, I can at least cover a side or two with chit-chat.

Prepared even as I was for the magnificence and parade of this Court ; yet it exceeds in everything my ideas : to this is joined the most perfect order and decorum. The Empress herself unites, in the most wonderful manner, the talents of putting those she honours with her conversation at their ease, and of keeping up her own dignity. Her character extends throughout her whole administration ; and although she is rigidly obeyed, yet she has introduced a lenity in the mode of government to which, till her reign, this country was a stranger.

* These letters are dated both in the New and Old Style.

The character of M. de Panin, her first minister, is too well known for me to enlarge upon it; he is civil to me beyond expression, and I always find his doors open to me. The foreign ministers here are few in number: I have found in several of them old acquaintance, and experienced civilities from them all.

I have been several times at court since my first audience, and have always been distinguished by Her Imperial Majesty. She has lately missed a court or two in the morning, from a slight indisposition, often dangerous at her time of life, but which is not attended with the least alarming symptom.

Mrs. Harris and my sister were prevented going to court immediately on their arrival, by a total destruction of their wardrobe, occasioned by the negligence of the captain on whose ship the boxes came. This loss is severely felt in a country where every article of this kind is constantly dear and scarce; but more particularly so at a moment when the festivities on the birth of the young Prince Alexander Paulowitz* increase the demand.

Since that a very severe head-ache prevented Mrs. Harris going the day that was fixed, and Sunday now remains for the ceremony of her presentation. The Russian ladies have been exceedingly civil and attentive in assisting her to repair her loss, and she is by their help enabled to appear completely equipped in a Russian dress.

* Afterwards the Emperor Alexander.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

St. Petersburg, 26th Jan., 6th Feb. 1778.

My Lord,—I have conferred with Count Panin twice. I broke the subject* to him with all possible precaution, yet I hope with frankness and becoming spirit. He was by no means prepared for such a communication. I saw evidently it surprised him, but am not sure it pleased him. He asked if I had any proposals to give in. I said, "our mutual honour, and our mutual advantage were the great ends proposed; that on consulting these, as well on the present critical position of the two empires, as with a view to the consequences of this crisis, it was easy to trace the great outlines of a treaty."

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

St. Petersburg, 26th Jan., 6th Feb. 1778.

My Lord,—I am too recently arrived to have formed any connexions I can rely on, and am too well acquainted with the national character of this people, not to mistrust any tenders I may have had, either of friendship, or of service. I felt, therefore, that if in conveying His Majesty's sentiments to the Empress, or in obtaining hers, I made use of any collateral or indirect influence, I exposed myself to the greatest hazard, of being betrayed, and consequently acquiring, on my outset, the reputation of an intriguing and uncandid negotiator,

* The proposed alliance.

and probably, by an immediate and total failure of the commission in charge, I should justly have drawn upon myself his Majesty's displeasure. It is, moreover, evident, that nobody but Count Panin has materially the Empress's ear in the discussion of foreign affairs, and that the others who approach her, never interfere but in the disposal of home employments and distribution of honours. It might, indeed, be fairly supposed, that there are some who, from the free access they have to her person, and from the great predilection she shows them, might, in certain moments, bias her opinion ; but they are chosen from that set of men the most averse to public business, or to any serious reflections, and are so munificently provided for by their Imperial Mistress, that it is impossible ever to catch their attention by any pecuniary emoluments, however considerable.

The addressing myself, therefore, directly to Count Panin appeared to me as the only channel left open. In doing this, I endeavoured as much as possible to consult the character of the man ; great good nature, great vanity, and excessive indolence, are the marked features of it. He joins to these, a wonderful desire of being thought open and frank, and, in discoursing on business, aims, though unsuccessfully, at all the dignity of the first minister of, what he thinks, the first empire in the world. I should not do him justice if I did not add, that he is beyond the reach of corruption,* and in all transactions where he moves alone, he acts with integrity and honour.

Convinced as I was of the infatuation he has for

* Because better paid by Frederick the Great than any one else could pay him, as appears hereafter.

the King of Prussia, and the attention which he pays to all intelligence coming from that quarter, I was well aware I should find him prepossessed with those false notions relative to us, which I knew to be current at Berlin, and that, therefore, in breaking the subject to him, it became me to dwell forcibly upon the stability of the present measures, and spirited state of the nation. I was satisfied also, that in the very first instance I should destroy every chance of success if I began by a philippic against his Prussian Majesty, and that the expressing myself with bitterness or censure on his score, would not only give weight to his scurrilous assertions relative to us, but from that perfect confidence and high opinion they have of him, would, in some measure, be reflected upon them. With whatever truth or justice I might have spoken such a language, it was little likely to be admitted into a mind not very manly, and replete with vanity.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 30th Jan., 10th Feb. 1778.

My Lord,—If I rightly understand the spirit of the instructions, it was to learn from this Court, how far they are disposed to enter into an *Offensive and Defensive Alliance* with ours. If their disposition was favourable, to put such a negotiation in forwardness; and, if adverse, to dismiss the subject without leaving any unpleasant impressions, or suffering evil effects to arise from good intentions.

In the first, and indeed only conversation, I ever had with Count Panin on political subjects, previous to the arrival of Russel, in speaking of the Courts of London and Petersburg, he made use of these words, *Nous avons les mêmes intérêts, les mêmes malheurs, et les mêmes ennemis.* It appeared to me, therefore, that I could not break the subject to him with more propriety than in taking up his own text. It was for this reason, that, on entering his closet, I told him I made no apology for coming to him at an undue hour, since the subject I had to communicate was not only in itself very important, but from the declaration he had made me of his sentiments (and here I repeated his own words), would, I was sure, be a very agreeable one to him, &c. &c.

That from these considerations, and from others too obvious for me to suggest, it appears to be a decisive moment for the cementing the union between the two Courts by a defensive and offensive alliance; and that, in consequence of this opinion, I had orders to learn the sentiments of Her Imperial Majesty on this subject, which I thought I could not obtain more certainly, nor in a more becoming manner, than by thus opening myself with candour and sincerity to his Excellency.

He had heard me with great attention, and, as well from his answer as from his looks, was evidently surprised at the declaration. Unprepared as he was for such a proposition, he could not, he said, off-hand, speak to it accurately: that he could assure me, the Empress would be highly pleased with this mark of His Majesty's attachment; and he hoped no doubt could be entertained of his own sentiments on the subject, &c., &c.

He promised me to see the Empress as early as possible, to communicate to her what I had said, and thus

ended our first conversation. An opportunity occurring the next day of my speaking to Count Panin before he had seen the Empress, I enforced what I had said the preceding one, by repeating to him that we had no narrow views, no interests of the moment to satisfy; that the great object in view was the formation of a permanent and advantageous system to counteract the Family Compact; and that I was ordered to make the overture to him which I had made, from the predilection of the nation to a Russian alliance, and from the conformity of the sentiments of the two Sovereigns and their Ministers.

The three following days nothing passed on the subject; but Sunday, at Court, Count Panin took me into the Grand Duke's apartment, and there held to me the conversation I have the honour of transmitting to your Lordship in French, which your Lordship receives in the language and manner in which I drew it up for Count Panin's inspection. It is corrected by him, and the sentence underlined is of his own dictating.

INCLOSURE.

Hier au matin après la Cour de Monseigneur le Grand Duc, son Excellence Mons. le Comte Panin me fit l'honneur de me dire qu'il avoit fait le rapport à sa Majesté Impériale de ce que je lui avois communiqué, dans deux conversations consécutives, au sujet d'une alliance offensive et défensive entre les deux Cours.

Voici a peu près les termes dans lesquels ce Ministre s'est exprimé.

Que l'Impératrice recevoit avec sensibilité cette preuve

de l'attachement du Roi. Que son estime personnelle pour sa Majesté, aussi bien que sa prédilection pour la nation Anglaise, étoient toujours les mêmes. Qu'elle reconnaissait que les intérêts des deux empires, soit ceux du commerce, soit ceux de la politique étoient si fortement unis, qu'on ne pouvoit guères porter atteinte à la prépondérance d'un des puissances, sans que celle de l'autre en pâtit. Qu'avec de pareils sentiments, et persuadée comme elle étoit, de la réciprocité la plus parfaite de la part du Roi, il étoit evident qu'elle ne s'opposeroit point à l'alliance projettée, mais qu'à l'égard des arrangemens ultérieurs, et dans une matière si importante, on devroit nécessairement se régler par des circonstances, sans la parfaite connoissance desquelles, elle ne pouvoit entrer dans un plus grand détail. Qu'il y avoit, sans contredit, beaucoup de parité entre les positions actuelles des deux Cours, mais que les troubles qui la menaçoient, n'étoient pas encore assez démélés pour qu'elle put prévoir où ils la méneroient. Que d'ailleurs depuis le départ de mon courier de Londres la mort inopinée de l'Electeur de Bavière avoit ouvert une porte à des brouilleries en Allemagne, et que bien que dans ce moment les démonstrations de toutes les puissances intéressés dans cette succession étoient pacifiques, il étoit impossible de prononcer sur les suites. Pour cette raison et pour prévenir les inconvéniens qui pourroient résulter, si on commençoit à négocier avant que de se bien entendre.. Sa Majesté Impériale desiroit savoir à fond nos idées sur l'état actuel de l'Europe ; notre systême en conséquence de ces idées, et ensuite de cet exposé (qu'elle regarderoit comme une marque de la confiance particulière du Roi) de recevoir de nous l'ébauche d'un traité *d'alliance défensive.* Qu'elle articuloit le mot *défensive,* non par aucun éloignement de conclure l'union la plus étroite entre les deux Cours, mais

que depuis son avènement elle n'avoit jamais signé que des traités d'alliances *défensives, et que la terme d'offensive* la répugnoit.

Voila, my Lord, un récit fidèle de ce que son Excellence me rendit de la part de la Majesté Impériale. Il me reste à présent de vous informer de ce que son Excellence a ajouté de son chef.

Elle m'a assuré de la manière la plus forte de la bonne volonté où sa Majesté Impériale étoit de co-opérer à la perfection du projet que je lui avois étalé. Que dans cette intention seule et unique l'Impératrice avoit témoigné son envie d'être instruite plus particulièrement de nos idées à l'égard du systême général ; de notre position présent relative à ce systême, et du parti que nous avions dessein de prendre à l'avenir. Alors, qu'en se réglant selon nos avis (qui attendu notre proximité et notre situation intéressante, seroient plus correctes et plus détaillés que ceux qu'elle pourroit avoir ici). Elle pourroit s'y conformer avec une entière connoissance de cause, et contribuer de la manière la plus efficace à l'avantage mutual des deux couronnes. En parlant du systême général de l'Europe son Excellence fit la distinction, *qu'il y a des combinaisons d'intérêt plus particulières de l'Angleterre par sa situation locale, qu'on ne sauroit trouver dans celle de la Russie, dont la combinaison, et la participation doivent nécessairement dépendre de son intérêt particulier dans le systême du nord.*

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 30th January, 10th February, 1778.

My Lord,—On comparing last night with Count Panin what I meant to write to your Lordship, with

what he had said to me the preceding day, I took an opportunity of discussing almost every sentence separately. I can, therefore, be under no apprehension of misleading your lordship in the account I give of Her Imperial Majesty's answer to what her Minister had reported to her from me. He subscribed to the whole, and repeatedly assured me I had expressed the Empress's sentiments with the greatest precision. I may venture to say the same in respect to that part of the letter, which more immediately regards his own disposition relative to the alliance; and if his reasonings in consequence of it, are less clear, I can exculpate myself from blame, by alleging that the words in which they are conveyed were of his own dictating.

His meaning I take to be, that, speaking in general terms, the interests of England and Russia are closely united: that, however, in the chapter of accidents, events may arise, which might, from her situation, more directly affect Great Britain than Russia, and in which Russia could take no share from the particular interest she had to maintain the northern system as at present established.

After I had written down his words I told his Excellency, that I could not foresee any such events, since it was manifest our wishes coincided with what I understood to be the groundwork of the system of the north, the counteracting the effects of the Family Compact; that, therefore, it was as little likely we should ever be in a situation to act, either from choice or necessity, against the principles of this northern system, as it was that we should ever subscribe to the tenets of the above-mentioned compact. But, I added, supposing it should be His Majesty's inclination to subscribe to the northern system his Excellency referred to, however well convinced the Empress and her Ministers might be of the impor-

tance of our concurring in it, I was by no means certain we should not meet with a negative voice from a power that had very great influence on this side of Europe. I conveyed this suggestion in the most gentle, though very clear manner, affecting to advance it as a fact, not reproach. It, however, made a very deep impression on Count Panin, who, though the most placid man in the world, seized me by the hand, and said in these strong terms, " *Vous m'avez dépeint à votre ministère comme un homme franc et intègre, je veux mériter ce titre auprès de vous, et je vous déclare ici très solennellement, et foi d'homme d'honneur, que les mains de l'Impératrice ne sont liées en rien ; qu'elle est la maîtresse de rompre les engagemens qu'elle a pris, d'en contracter des nouveaux, et qu'en tout, et toujours, elle ne se conduit que par ses propres lumières, et de la manière la plus conforme au bien-être de son empire.*"

I answered, that I heard with great pleasure what his Excellency told me ; that it removed many doubts which had crept into my head (que cela me rassuroit infiniment). What ! replied he with eagerness, did you ever suppose we suffered ourselves to be led ? I said that, at the place of my residence for the last five years, I had heard so much of the great degree of influence of the Monarch at this Court, and it had been so affectedly spread about, that from habit I had been in a manner brought to believe it. Count Panin here again repeated what he had before said ; avowed himself the *author* of the present northern system ; that of course he knew the most secret springs by which it was moved ; and almost with an oath asserted the independence of Her Imperial Majesty, declaring that she had no leave to ask, nor any opinion to receive, in forming any connexions she in her wisdom might choose to contract. He desired me to ex-

press these his sentiments to your Lordship, and assured me, that I should find them strictly true in every subsequent part of my negotiation.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO WILLIAM EDEN, ESQ.

Petersburg, February 2nd, 13th, 1778.

My dear Eden,—The day Russel arrived, as I was driving through the streets of this town in a sledge with the Spanish Minister, he, in conducting it, contrived to run against the polè of a coach in so violent a manner as to give me two large cuts in my neck and one in my lip; my right wrist was also considerably strained, and I was very near being deprived of both my tongue and hand at a moment when I was much in want of both of them. As, however, I immediately washed the wounds (for they almost deserve that name) with brandy and water, and have since kept all surgeons from interfering, I was well enough the next day to go to Mons. Panin, and now have only two large patches on my throat. I do not mention all this as a fact by any means worthy your notice, but because, in consequence of it, Her Imperial Majesty sent the lieutenant of the police to me in order that I should help him to discover and bring to punishment the coachman concerned, and has since published a *ukase*, prohibiting all fast driving in the streets. On my first appearance at Court afterwards, both the Empress and Grand Duke were remarkably attentive in their inquiry, all which attentions, as they certainly are paid to the character I hold, I thought it might not be unpleasant for you to hear. The ukase and punishment ought chiefly to regard Mr. Lacy,* as the fault lay prin-

* Spanish Minister.

cipally at his door: indeed, as he is a vain man and thinks he does everything well, he is, perhaps, as severely punished by the constant attacks made upon his skill in driving, as the poor coachman would have been, if I had wished to have found him out, by the knout.

I have not been here long enough to write with any degree of precision on the several characters which compose the Court and first society here. Great luxury and little morality seem to run through every rank. Flattery and servility characterize the inferior class, presumption and pride the higher one. A slight, though brilliant varnish covers in both the most illiterate and uninformed minds. Their entertainments, their apartments, and the number of their domestics, are quite Asiatic; and what is very odd, though perhaps very natural, although they imitate the foreigners in everything, and have (I speak of the higher class) neither customs nor character of their own, yet, generally speaking, a stranger is ill received when he comes among them. I, however, am very far from laying myself this imputation at their door, since I have experienced, as well as Mrs. Harris and my sister, every possible civility from them.

The Lieutenant of Police of Moscow, Mons. Acharoff, is a middle-aged man, well made, though with more of the Hercules than the Apollo. There is, I understand, a *Persian* candidate in case of M. de Zoritz's resignation; but I cannot speak of his figure, as I am not personally acquainted with him. Zoritz is prepared for his dismission, but I am told he is resolved to call his successor to an account. "Je sais bien que je dois sauter, mais par Dieu je couperai les oreilles à celui qui prend ma place," were his words, in talking the other day on this subject.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 2nd., 13th Feb. 1778.

My Lord,—The present favourite, Zoritz, seems on the decline. He has received and dissipated an immense fortune; but what does credit to one raised to so high a rank, he has employed his influence in doing good, and rendering services to those he thought neglected. It is probable Potemkin will be commissioned to look out for a fresh *minion*, and I have heard named (although I can by no means assert it), that he has already pitched on one Acharoff, *Lieutenant* of the *Police* at Moscow. Prince Orlow is inseparable from his new wife. She is capricious, headstrong, and very young. He still maintains a great degree of favour, but he has no desire of exerting it, and I fear is so very indolent, that no motives can urge him to take an active part.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO SIR JOSEPH YORKE, AT THE HAGUE.

Petersburg, 2nd., 13th Feb. 1778.

Sir,—I am never so happy as when I receive any marks of your Excellency's remembrance and goodness. The longer I live, the more valuable such demonstrations become; and, although I have no reason to quarrel with the world, yet I find that an upright heart and enlightened mind, are much rarer qualities than they ought to be on the face of the earth.

This country, whilst it thinks itself at the period of glory and political perfection, is, perhaps, in the most dangerous crisis on which it ever stood; yet the great

good fortune of the Empress, joined to her resolution and parts, may supply many deficiencies, and stand in lieu of able Generals and expert Statesmen. The worst enemies she has are flattery, and her own passions; she never turns a deaf ear to the first, let it be ever so gross, and her inclination for gratifying the latter appears to grow upon her with age.

They amuse themselves and the public with hopes of an accommodation with the Porte; yet I do not find they have any ground for these hopes, but the long time their courier is bringing the ultimatum from Constantinople. The Turks, in the meanwhile, are preparing really a formidable fleet on the Black Sea, and are taking much more efficacious steps towards forming a regular army, than any they have yet attempted.

The preponderance of the King of Prussia exists here in its full force; the oversetting this, is the persuading deaf ears to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely; yet this must be subverted before we can reap any essential advantage from hence. I hope our friends at home will consider how difficult a task they have imposed upon me, and not impute my want of success to want of attention, of zeal, or of spirit. I am perfectly indifferent to the unpleasant situation a too free declaration of my sentiments might place me in here, in my private capacity, provided I can, in the remotest degree, effectuate what, as a good patriot, and even as a cosmopolite, I could wish to bring to bear.

The system of the Court goes on here in its old train; immense prodigality, and a habit of indolence and procrastination reigns from the first to the last. The Great Duke and Duchess live indeed on the best terms, and offer an example they neither receive, nor can get imitated.

Your Excellency will, I hope, instruct and inform me as often as you have leisure. I have a most ticklish game to play; and although I do not despond, yet I see the great advantages my adversaries have over me. Much will depend on American affairs, and still more from the turn the litigated succession* may produce in Europe.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 13th, 24th of Feb. 1778.

My Lord,—I confess that it is more for the sake of endeavouring to obey my instructions to the utmost, rather than from any hopes of success, that I leave nothing untried to recall this Court to a sense of its real interests, by discovering to them the imminent dangers that surround them, and which, if they have not recourse to their natural ally, will shake, if not crush, the very foundations of their empire. The thorough conviction, however, the Empress is under of her being invincible, the supineness of her Ministers, and the continual dissipation of those who more immediately surround her, and above all, the idea they are prejudiced with, that we want them more than they want us, will, I fear, prevent anything I can advance taking effect, and that till the blow is felt, they will never be persuaded, that their ideas, as well of their own situation, as of that of the other Powers of Europe, are greatly erroneous.

* The right of succession to Bavaria; claimed by Austria, the Prince de Deux Ponts, the Electress of Saxony, and the Duke of Mecklenburgh.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO THOMAS WROUGHTON, ESQ., AT WARSAW.

Petersburg, 27th Feb. O. S., 1778.

SIR,—I trust our correspondence will go on as that between old acquaintance always ought, freely, confidentially, and frequently. We may often be of use to one another, and sometimes necessary, in conjunction to carry on his Majesty' service.

I think Europe is in a critical situation; the convulsion is general, and may increase. Our spirit is high, the case urgent, and I do not doubt we shall rise above the pressure, hard as it bears upon us.

I have every reason to be flattered with my reception here, and expect that my residence will come up in every shape to my wishes.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH,* VIENNA.

Petersburg, 27th Feb. O. S. 1778.

SIR,—The war between this Court and the Porte appears inevitable; from the language held to me, they rather impute it to the intrigues of the Court of Vienna, than to that of France; not that they suppose the dispositions of the Court of Versailles amicable, but that their credit at Constantinople is sunk. Their preparations here go on indolently, while those of their adversary exceed both in force and judiciousness any they have heretofore made.

There is a kind of suspense here, till the affairs of Germany take a decisive turn; if they terminate quietly,

* English Minister at Vienna.

probably no change in the system will immediately take place; if otherwise, I have little doubt but that the great powers of Europe will be nearly equally divided, and that it will require more temper, more wisdom, and more resolution than I believe belong to mortal men, to prevent a general war.

The predilection for the King of Prussia remains here in full force; and, unless he is playing them false, on knowing his intended measures, you may easily come at theirs. Every ostensible civility and attention is shown to the Austrian Minister; but they are jealous of the greatness of that power, and dubious of its sincerity. Denmark seems their sworn creature; Sweden occupies them less than formerly, and all thoughts of restoring the ancient government seem to be laid aside, for the present, at least.

As to us, though they do not look upon us as we deserve, and have forgot the obligations they are under to us, yet as they may want us again, and that soon, I think they are drawing nearer towards us, than at any period since the peace; and that if, from present expediency, or from more remote reasons, we wish to connect ourselves more closely to them, it might probably be effectuated.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 6th, 18th March, 1778.

My Lord,—Since my last I have been honoured with your Lordship's letter of the 20th February.

Besides the sumptuous fêtes of the principal nobility, upon the late joyful occasion,* (the last of which at Prince

* Birth of the Grand Duke's son.

Potemkin's cost 50,000 roubles,) the Empress was pleased to give one in the course of the Carnival, the magnificence and good taste of which surpassed everything that can be conceived. The dessert at supper was set out with jewels to the amount of upwards of two millions sterling; and at the tables of Macao, (a game much in vogue here at present,) besides the stake in money played for, a diamond of fifty roubles' value was given by Her Imperial Majesty to each of those who got *nine*, the highest point of the game. One hundred and fifty diamonds were distributed in this manner. None but Russians of the highest rank were honoured with an invitation to this party; but for some days after foreigners and others were admitted to a sight of this most beautiful decoration of jewels, which was equally extraordinary for the elegance of the design, as for the costliness of the materials.

LETTER FROM SIR GILBERT ELLIOT TO MR. HARRIS.

London, 20th March, 1778.

My dear Harris,—I do not intend to send you anything to-night. There is so much stirring, and things are so much unsettled at present, that it is probable by Tuesday anything I should send you to-night would be as stale as I now find my letter of the 6th March before mentioned. I must, however, just enumerate the titles of the different events, although I cannot undertake to relate them. I hope to be more explicit on Tuesday. We had just passed the bills for repealing some of the obnoxious American Acts, and for enabling the King to appoint five Commissioners to treat with America, with very large powers which I will not now describe, when the report of the French treaty with the Colonies became very preva-

lent, and obtained credit here. Government, however, certainly had obtained no authentic account of it, (which is singular enough,) and Lord North positively disclaimed all knowledge of it. The loan of six millions was made on very hard terms for the public, much owing to the report of the French treaty. The Three per Cent Consols being at 66½,—monstrously low. The subscription was however filled, (of which Jack, by the bye, had 100,000,) and the first payment was fixed for Tuesday last. On the Friday before, the Marquis de Noailles delivered a paper to Lord Weymouth, communicating the treaty of commerce and alliance with the Colonies, and acknowledging their Independency. The manner and style of the communication was inexpressibly insolent, and was no doubt meant as a studied affront and challenge. I have mentioned the loan and this communication together, because the latter, from the time in which it was made, was probably meant to affect the payment of Tuesday. On Saturday all the French in London were sent to the opera, plays, clubs, coffee-houses, ale-houses, and spill-houses to publish the intelligence, which they did with their natural impertinence. On Tuesday the two Houses received a message from the King informing them of the communication from the French ambassador, that he had recalled his ambassador from Versailles, and assuring them that he would exert every means in his power to protect the honour and interest of his kingdom. In answer to which the two Houses voted an address, promising to support him with our lives and fortunes. Opposition, like good patriots, in answer to this message, proposed to address the King to remove his Ministers, and C. Fox assured us he thought an invasion a much better thing, than the continuance of the present Administration. When this proposal was negatived, they

therefore refused their assent to our address. There is no declaration of war yet, but as it is quite certain, and as France will undoubtedly act immediately, I do not see what we gain by delaying it. I hope at least we shall begin taking their ships immediately. The militia is to be called out. We have no allies that I hear of; we have a strong fleet, and I believe all is said. Credit dreadfully low. Stock was a few days ago at 60, the lowest at the end of last war was 61, and we are now at the beginning of one. The French are poorer than we, that's something.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO HUGH ELLIOT, ESQ., BERLIN.

Petersburg 20th, 31st March, 1778.

SIR,—Every body about the Court here are mimics of the French, in their dress, morals, and manners, the Empress herself, and perhaps Count Panin, excepted, and these too, even now seem to listen with more attention than usual to the insidious politics of that nation. The extreme indolence and dissipation of the Minister makes him ready, at all times, to believe everything which tends to gratify his ease, and prevent trouble. The incredible vanity of the Sovereign gets the better of her fine parts; she is willing to give credit to any assertion that she supposes to be in consequence of her own greatness and power. The remoteness of their situation makes them forget the *cause* when the *effect* is felt; and although since this reign several events have happened, which ought to have roused them to a sense of their situation, their credulity still remains in its full force. It is for this reason that they receive cordially the friendly offers of the French Minister; and

although I cannot think they will suffer them to be the affected mediators of a pacification with the Turks, yet they have admitted the Bourbon Ministers here to a greater degree of confidence than they ever should have at this Court. Yet, Mons. de Panin ought to know, as well as those less able to obtain information than himself, that there subsists the most perfect intimacy between these ministers and Count Kaunitz;* that they communicate reciprocally all their intelligence, and probably agree with each other beforehand, in their mode of doing business. Count Kaunitz also, notwithstanding the repeated and public declamations of this Court against the proceedings of that of Vienna, receives every kind of distinction, and as he certainly is not entitled to them from any personal or private qualifications, they must be imputed to the flattering language he is instructed to make use of when he acts in his public capacity. Count Solms takes great umbrage at this conduct, complains of their want of attention to him; of their leaving his business undone, his letters unanswered, and apprehends, what I believe is by no means probable, that his Master's interest here is sinking. I am assiduous in paying my Court both to the Empress and Count Panin, and have no reason to be dissatisfied with the way in which I am treated. The Empress generally names me of her card party; and although a good deal of her conversation is addressed to Counts Kaunitz and Lacy, yet I enjoy as much of it as falls to my share. Count Panin I see daily, and convinced as I am, that nothing but necessity can open their eyes, I urge in the strongest terms the present critical position of Europe; the danger of a war breaking out in several parts of it at once, and the great expediency of some system being

* Afterwards Austrian Prime Minister.

fixed on, either for preventing these evils, or for repelling them with vigour when they arrive.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 30th March, 10th April, 1778.

My Lord,—Mons. de Panin took me this afternoon into his closet, and acquainted me, that the French Ministers at Vienna and the Hague, had declared officially, that their Court had agreed to acknowledge the Independence of the Americans; and though they did not speak of any treaty as being actually concluded between them, yet they did not scruple confessing, that such a treaty was in agitation.

Mons. de Panin further added, that by his letters from Hamburg, he learnt that Lord Stormont* had been ordered home, and that a war between England and France was unavoidable. All this intelligence, he informed me, came by a messenger from Riga, which brings his letters more expeditiously than they could come by the post. I answered him, as I had not yet received mine, I could neither confirm nor deny the fact he advanced. That if true, it ought to be a warning, how little attention should be paid to the promises or protestations of the Court of Versailles; and as that, in the instance he now mentioned, they had so grossly broken their word with us, it was fairly to be supposed, they would not be more tenacious of it towards others. Mons. de Panin assented to this, and I was glad to find that he began to harbour some doubts about the good faith of that Court in the present transactions. I still, however, see great difficulties to

* From Paris.

surmount, and clearly perceive that they mean to avail themselves of our situation, to drive as hard a bargain as possible, even supposing they ever mean to treat at all. Yet their situation is far from being prosperous; they have no reason to expect any real services from the many powers which affect using their good offices at the Porte.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg 3rd, 14th April, 1778.

My Lord,—A few hours after my last was sent to the post I received your Lordship's letter, inclosing the extraordinary Declaration* made on the 13th March to his Majesty's Secretary of State for the Southern department; and late last night I was honoured with your Lordship's despatches, containing his Majesty's message to both Houses of Parliament, and their spirited addresses in consequence of this unjust and unwarrantable step of the Court of France.

In obedience to your Lordship's commands I immediately communicated these papers to the Russian Minister, who, I have no doubt, sees the dignified conduct of his Majesty, on this occasion, in the light it deserves, and considers this rash and unprovoked measure of the French Cabinet as a fresh proof of that restless disposition which has made them so often responsible for all the horrors of war, and fixed upon them the title of the disturbers of the general tranquillity. I did not fail, my Lord, of inculcating on Count Panin, how glaringly they had

* France declared that she should trade with the Americans as an independent people, and would protect that trade by force.

deviated from the principles of national good faith, by having repeatedly declared their desire of preserving peace, and by their continued assurances of friendship towards us, till the very moment they so very indecently flung off the mask, and publicly avowed themselves protectors of his Majesty's rebellious subjects, &c., &c.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 3rd, 14th April, 1778.

My Lord—Although Mons. de Panin had announced to the Foreign Ministers, that he should this week be entirely taken up by his devotions, and not accessible to any one on matters of business, I thought the contents of your Lordship's despatch, too important to admit of delay ; I therefore asked and obtained leave to wait on him this morning.

I shall send him, this afternoon, the inclosed paper, together with Mons. de Noailles' declaration, and a French translation of the message and addresses for the Empress's perusal.*

INCLOSURE.

Le soussigné, Envoyé Extraordinaire et Ministre Plénipotentiaire de sa Majesté Britannique, a reçu l'ordre le plus précis du Roi son Maître, de faire part à sa Majesté Impériale (en lui communiquant les pièces ci-jointes) combien sa Majesté est indignée de la conduite récente de la Cour de Versailles ; conduite d'autant plus outrageante, qu'elle était immédiatement précédée des assurances les plus fortes du désir que sa Majesté très Chrétienne avait

* The King's message to the Houses of Parliament, and their addresses, will be found in the Annual Register of the year.

de conserver inviolablement la bonne harmonie entre les deux Cours.

Le Roi toujours persuadé qu'il trouvera dans sa Majesté Impériale, cette réciprocité d'amitié, que a tant contribuée au bonheur des deux nations, espère que sa Majesté Impériale partagera vivement les sentiments à cette occasion, et qu'elle envisagera cette démarche insidieuse de la Cour de France, comme une infraction préméditée de la paix de l'Europe.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 13th, 24th April, 1778.

My Lord,—I am sorry to say that I do not perceive in the Empress herself, or in either of her Ministers, that good-will towards us, which has so often been expressed by them, when they have been more in need of our assistance, than we of theirs. If they should desert us in the hour of trial, I flatter myself no imputation of neglect will be laid to my charge: I have kept your Lordship constantly informed of my sentiments on this subject, and they have not varied from the moment of my arrival, to this day.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO SIR JOSEPH YORKE, HAGUE.

Petersburg, 1st May, O. S. 1778.

Dear Sir,—The declaration of the French Ambassador created in me more indignation than surprise; the conduct of the Court of Versailles, from the first pe-

riod of our American contest, has been fraught with duplicity, baseness, and low cunning. I have endeavoured to make them see it in that light here, but have only succeeded in drawing from the Empress a civil answer, and lukewarm expressions of friendship. I wish I could promise myself any hopes of succeeding, in making her fulfil even these lukewarm expressions; but I find her character so different from what I was told it was, and her good-will towards us so changed, that it will require, I believe, my greatest efforts to prevent her doing harm, instead of prevailing on her to do us good. I, however, (speaking to your Excellency with perfect confidence,) am instructed to propose an alliance, and have actually given in a project; as, however, it is word for word the same as that so often rejected, I have little hopes of its being admitted in its present shape. I have powers to mould it anew, and as I think the terms are urgent, shall, in inferior points, take upon myself a decision, which, from the great distance of the two capitals, I trust, will be allowed me. I wish I did not think I saw a want of this decision at home, and am sure to find here all the obstacles indolence and a love of procrastination can create. The Empress herself has not that ardour for business she was used to be famous for, yet she still will not be biassed by her Ministers; these, particularly Count Panin, neglect, beyond conception, the duty of their offices. Subalterns do the same as their superiors, and the business of this great Empire does itself. The effects of it are visible; confusion and imperfection are to be found everywhere. Great expenses, and nothing to show for them. The army in a state of decay; their navy incomplete and ill-equipped; their political system inconsistent, languid, and such as if pursued, must ulti-

mately reduce this immense mass of power to that state of Asiatic insignificancy from which it so lately emerged. The King of Prussia has lost his influence; ours, never very high, though some of my predecessors were cajoled into the belief of its being so, has quite vanished. The canting flattery of the Empress Queen, has eradicated all that little feminine animosity which subsisted here against her. The plausible and insidious language of the House of Bourbon, conveyed through the channel of corrupted and unprincipled favourites, has found its way to the Imperial ear. The natural and necessary allies of this country are neglected. Those interested to diminish its greatness and power are listened to. One general erroneous system reigns throughout the whole, and, unless some sudden light breaks in upon them, or an unexpected stroke revives them to their senses, nothing good or great can be expected from them. Strong as this description may appear, I can safely affirm it does not exceed the truth; my commission therefore is neither an easy, nor an agreeable one; particularly as the pride and vanity of this Court, make them, in discoursing of ours, hold a language as unbecoming for me to hear, as under the present circumstances it would be impolitic for me to repeat. Despair, thank God, makes no part of my character, and as long as I see the remotest hopes of bringing them back to a sense of their failings, I shall leave nothing untried to effect it; if I succeed, I expect little thanks; if I fail, I have no doubt that much blame will be laid at my door; such, ten years' experience in my career, has taught me to know, are the fruits of our labours, and I have made up my mind accordingly.

The King of Prussia has made us some advances. If he is sincere, and we are determined, she must join us ultimately.

The interior of this Court is one continued scene of intrigue, debauchery, iniquity, and corruption. The Great Duke and Duchess must be excepted from any share in this description; they live in great harmony together, and interfere in nothing. I wish, sooner or later, he may not be tempted to take advantage of the confused state of things, and attempt a project which certainly would prove fatal to him; I know evil spirits are not wanting to excite him to it.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

Petersburg, 24th April, 5th May, 1778.

COUNT KAUNITZ'S last courier, besides an exact communication of everything which had passed between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, relative to the present altercation, till the 1st April inclusively, brought a letter from the Empress Queen, written with her own hand, to the Empress of Russia, in which, after having fully explained her own conduct and that of His Prussian Majesty, she leaves Her Imperial Majesty to decide whether the title of Agressor belongs to this Prince or herself.* She then enlarges on the miseries of war; laments the being forced into it at her advanced age; and expresses great horror at the probability of being summoned out of this world, at a moment when her mind must necessarily be filled with ideas very improper to carry into the next. The letter concludes with the highest assurances of friend-

* War was going on at this time between the King and the Empress Queen relative to the Bavarian succession, His Prussian Majesty having taken up the claims of the German Princes, which he wished referred to a Diet, against the forcible seizure of Bavaria by the Austrians.

ship and attachment, and calls upon the Empress of Russia, both as a Christian and as a Sovereign, to use her influence with the King of Prussia, in endeavouring to dissuade him from persisting in demands so inadmissible as his hitherto have been.

I believe no answer has yet been given to this letter. The increased distinctions with which the Austrian Minister has been treated since its being delivered, indicate, beyond a doubt, the extreme satisfaction the Empress of Russia feels, from the importance such a request gives her. Yet still I cannot be brought to believe even this sentiment of vanity, powerful as it is, will induce her to take such a step, which would mark so evident a predilection to the Court of Vienna, and be so contradictory to the assurances she has already given to that of Berlin.

No conclusion can be drawn from the language held here about the result of their disputes with the Turks. The Ministry foretell peace or war, as is most convenient for the purposes of the moment.

The Empress has given to Count Kaunitz a very pleasant island on the Neva for his summer habitation.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 11th, 22nd May, 1778.

My Lord,—From the moment I had it in command to promote a closer connexion with this Court, I made it my study to investigate the genius and disposition of those immediately about the Empress, the character and temper of the subalterns in office, and the means the most

fit to be employed, to make either these or their superiors instrumental towards the effecting what was the primary object of my instructions.

Nothing could be expected from those who form Her Imperial Majesty's society, and who appear to enjoy the largest share of her confidence; they are, either in themselves totally insignificant, or adhere to a political doctrine, very adverse to that I wished them to inculcate. Indeed, I have found amongst the inferiors many ready to betray their principals, but none from whom I could receive assistance sufficiently beneficial to authorize me to increase the expense of this mission, which (at least, while it is in my hands) will, I fear, be greatly beyond the services His Majesty will ever reap from it.

Prince Orlow was the only person in whom I could confide; and, convinced as I was that an alliance with this Court was become more desirable from the Declaration of the French Ambassador, as soon as I was in possession of this paper, I immediately communicated it to him, and endeavoured to engage him to take an active part on this occasion. He was very cordial, and, I believe, perfectly sincere in his professions of regard and predilection to us, and to our alliance. But he said he had no longer influence at Court; that the opposite party had prevailed, and that he owed too much to Her Imperial Majesty to attempt the oversetting it by means which necessarily would give her great pain and uneasiness.

I told him I was persuaded his interest was suspended, not sunk; and that, if he saw the Empress surrounded by persons who made an ill use of the confidence she had in them, it became him, as well from his attachment to her, as from his duty to his country, to stand forth and rescue

the empire from such dangerous hands. His answer was somewhat particular. "The time will come," he said, "when such a step may be necessary; events must bring this to pass; the internal and external position of our affairs, make these events inevitable. In the meanwhile, I can do nothing; you shall have my good word, if opportunity offers, and certainly my vote, if the subject is ever debated in Council." This was all I could obtain from Prince Orlow.

As I have kept your Lordship regularly informed of what has passed between the Russian Ministers and myself for these last three months, I need not repeat to you, that nothing favourable could be deduced from their conversation. From the interval, therefore, of the departure of Russel to the arrival of Booth, the result of my observation was, the mortification of having my suspicions confirmed, of the backwardness of this Court to form a connexion with ours, and the unpleasant prospect of redespatching the messenger, without being able to succeed in the important affair with which I was entrusted.

On the 5th May, Count Panin informed me, that the Empress had sent to him for all the papers in his office relative to the alliance, and that I might depend on being very soon acquainted with Her Imperial Majesty's sentiments. He subjoined nothing of his own, and from this day till his return from Czarscozelo, whither, after having been a fortnight without seeing the Empress, he professedly went at my instigation, he always waved the main subject, although I saw him daily, and seldom without discoursing on politics, declaring that the matter was now in the Empress's hands, and that Her Imperial Majesty would herself decide upon it.

I spent the 20th at his country-house; and between

the hours of dinner and supper he took me aside and told me, with much apparent concern, how sorry he was to have nothing good to communicate to me; that the Empress had most attentively and maturely perused the proposals I had given in; that, however strong her inclination was towards us, yet the present critical position of affairs would not allow her to unite the two Courts more intimately than they were already united; and that, if I would call upon him the next evening, he would be very explicit with me on the subject. I accordingly waited on him the following day, when he read me the inclosed paper;* previously, however, recapitulating everything that had passed, relative to an alliance between the two Courts, from the Empress's accession to this day, and endeavouring to prove, that, if it had not been concluded, it was not they, but we ourselves, that were the cause; that the paper delivered into my hands had been revised by the Empress herself; that I might be satisfied her predilection and regard for us was invariable, and that the very instant she saw an opening she would embrace our alliance with eagerness. I answered him, as I had no doubt that Her Imperial Majesty had formed her resolutions deliberately, so she had taken

* The Empress in this paper declares the impossibility of entering into a treaty which would oblige her immediately to take a part in our war against France, unless we bound ourselves to act in conjunction with her, if called upon to do so, against Turkey. Turkey was her natural enemy, as France was ours; and our proposition to omit our American colonies from the *casus fœderis* would be no compensation for our excluding Turkey from the arrangement. A war between Russia and Turkey was almost certain, and she would find herself thus with two enemies upon her hands, and no corresponding advantage accruing to her from her English alliance, which would be a dead letter with respect to the Northern powers, who were never likely to be at war with Russia.

them decisively; it would therefore, perhaps, be considered in me as deficient in that respect I owed her, as well as entirely fruitless, if I was to attempt to alter them. That, however, as she was so warm in her expressions of friendship towards His Majesty and good-will towards the nation, I was in great hopes this absolute rejection of an alliance with us would not be seen in England in the same light that it struck me. Count Panin here expressed some surprise. I told him he must forgive my freedom, and consider what I was going to say as my own private opinion, delivered without any instructions, and coming merely from my own feelings, and from my sincere wishes to see the two Courts of Great Britain and Russia on that perfect footing of good intelligence so salutary and so natural to them both. He here urged me to explain. I went on by saying, that I most cordially wished that after the having received our overtures of an alliance with attention, and, in consequence, having desired and obtained from His Majesty not only a full explanation of his sentiments, but actually the outlines of a treaty, the negativing it in a manner which might have been done as well at the moment the overture was made as after four months' consideration, would not carry with it an air of not being quite so eager to cultivate our union as the note his Excellency had given me set forth. That I was also apprehensive the motives Russia assigned for accepting the treaty of alliance as proposed in 1769, and those for refusing it now under the same description, would not be considered in the same manner in London as at Petersburg; and that particularly the two Courts would not coincide in their ideas, whether the present alarming juncture was, or was not, the proper instant for concluding a treaty. That we thought a moment of im-

pending danger the moment to assist our friends, or to obtain their assistance; a sentiment which did not seem to be entertained here. I continued by saying I had taken a good deal of pains to make myself master of what had passed between the two Courts since the peace of Paris, and that although I had the greatest deference for his Excellency's memory and judgment, yet he would allow me to differ from him when he supposed we were the cause of the alliance not having been already concluded; since I found, from the correspondence of my predecessors, that the proposals always originated from us, and that, whatever pains we had taken to make them agreeable to this Court, their fate had ever been the same; they had at first been received with every appearance of being admitted, but, in the event, had always been dismissed. That on the perusal of the same correspondence, confirmed by my own experience whilst in Spain, I found His Majesty had given the Empress every assistance during the last Turkish war she could have expected if even a treaty had subsisted between us; that though I was convinced the recollection of such a behaviour will never be regretted, yet it might possibly occur to His Majesty, or to some of his confidential servants, as I confess it did to me, that in one or two recent instances, when we called upon this Court for their good offices and assistance, we did not find precisely the same readiness to grant our request as we had manifested to comply with theirs. That, impressed as I was with these notions myself, I could not avoid communicating my apprehensions that they might exist at home; and that I ventured to express myself thus frankly, because I was sure it would give his Excellency as much concern as it would me, to see any diminution of the good harmony

subsisting between the two Courts, or the smallest abatement of that high notion they have hitherto entertained so justly of each other's good-faith and political integrity.

Count Panin did not seem prepared to answer these remarks; he contented himself with making the strongest assurances, in the Empress's name, never to enter into any engagements contrary to our interests: that the unsettled and dangerous situation of affairs alone prevented her from connecting herself with us immediately; a situation he was sure would give her additional concern if it should be the means of creating the smallest difference or coolness between the two Courts of London and Petersburg. I answered him, that in my narration to your Lordship I should endeavour to prevent any such sentiment entering into His Majesty's breast; that it was from this motive I had been induced to speak thus freely; and that I thought it the first duty of a person in my situation, never to suffer exaggerated reports or idle tales to find a place in his despatches.

Thus, my Lord, ended our conferences; from which it must be inferred there is no disposition here to agree to our alliance, *even on any terms;* since, without entering into any discussion with me, without inquiring what alterations I was empowered to admit of, or even listening to the advances I repeatedly made of new-moulding the treaty, the Empress has given me an answer, in itself sufficiently explicit, but made still clearer by the commentary and general behaviour of her Ministers.

The desire I always have to obey my instructions makes me certainly lament the issue this business has taken. I cannot, however, but console myself by reflecting that we were a great nation before Russia existed,

that we have repelled and subdued our enemies without their assistance, and that the time will probably come when they will stand in much greater need of us than we ever can of them.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO WILLIAM FRASER,* ESQ.

Petersburg, 16th, 27th May, 1778.

DEAR SIR,—I sincerely hope you will be more successful in everything you undertake, than I have been in my late negotiation. The friendship of this country partakes of its climate,—a clear brilliant sky, with a cold freezing atmosphere; all words, and no deeds; empty professions, and shuffling evasions. It is a political, though not a moral consolation, that their incongruous conduct proceeds from the erroneous opinion they have of the rise of their own power, and of the declension of ours; the period however is not very distant (and here comes the comfort) when their eyes shall be opened, and when they will be convinced, that whilst they permitted themselves to be amused with silky speeches, and were wrapt up in a confidence of their own *invincibility*, they were only allowing their ill-wishers to gain time, and the swords of their enemies to be sharpened, whilst theirs were rusting in the scabbard. It is then more than probable we may at that time have as many solid reasons for rejecting their alliance, as they now have alleged idle ones for not accepting ours. I own, I almost wish this event; for although in my public capacity I have a tolerable degree of patience, yet it requires more than ever fell to the share of mortal minister to converse with people who, in the midst of business and distress, are supine and insen-

* Under-Secretary of Foreign Department to Lord Suffolk.

sible, and who will neither hear a reasonable question nor give a reasonable answer. You will not credit me when I tell you Count Panin does not devote more than half an hour in the twenty-four to business; and that Mr. Oakes, having been robbed of a considerable sum of money, found the *Lieutenant de Police*, the first magistrate of the empire, and whose power is immense, at seven o'clock in the morning, playing at *la grande patience*, with a dirty pack of cards, by himself.

The interior of the Court presents a similar scene of dissipation and inattention; age does not deaden the passions, they rather quicken with years: and on a closer approach I find report had magnified the eminent qualities, and diminished the foibles, of one of the greatest ladies in Europe.

A few days ago Prince Potemkin, displeased with Zoritz, presented to the Empress, as she was going to the play, a tall hussar officer, one of his adjutants. She distinguished him a good deal. Zoritz was present. As soon as Her Imperial Majesty was gone, he fell upon Potemkin in a very violent manner, made use of the strongest expressions of abuse, and insisted on his fighting him. Potemkin declined this offer, and behaved on the occasion as a person not undeserving the invectives bestowed upon him. The play being ended, Zoritz followed the Empress into her apartment, flung himself at her feet, and confessed what he had done; saying, that, notwithstanding the honours and riches she had heaped upon him, he was indifferent to everything but her favour and good graces. This behaviour had its effect. When Potemkin appeared, he was ill received, and Zoritz seemed in high favour for a day or two.

Potemkin left Czarsco-Zelo, and came to Petersburg. Zoritz however has since been sent here, and the Empress

ordered him to invite Potemkin to supper, *de raccommoder l'affaire, puisqu'elle n'aimait pas les tracasseries.* This supper took place a few days ago: they are apparently good friends; but Potemkin, who is an artful man, will in the end get the better of Zoritz's bluntness and singularity. Potemkin is determined to have him dismissed, and Zoritz is determined to cut the throat of his successor. Judge of the tenour of the whole Court from this anecdote.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO HIS FATHER.

Petersburg, May 27th, 1778.

HONOURED SIR,—Gertrude has been so full and circumstantial in her letter, that this can convey little more than thanks for your account of the proceedings in Parliament. The messenger came in nineteen days, a very quick journey: I hope his return will be equally expeditious.

It is not candid to condemn measures the groundwork of which is unknown to me; but the appearance of irresolution and indecision in England has a sensible effect on the Continent, and, till we give stronger proofs of our being in a vigorous and nervous system, we must not expect essential assistance or support from any of our friends on this side the water. I always impute a great deal to the virulence and inconsiderate conduct of Opposition, but this alone could not reduce our national reputation so low as it now is. I am convinced by experience that this evil is not felt at home in a direct manner, and of course it is not attended to. The evil exists nevertheless, and its effects are not less dangerous from being slow. I have often held this language to men in high office; but some parliamentary job, or a reason equally good, has always prevented their paying

attention to what I said. The remedy now will be difficult: the disease is grown to its height, which, if taken in time, might have easily been prevented. So much for politics, which I write quite for your private ear, or at most for that of Mr. Hooper.* Our time, as individuals, goes on here pleasantly enough; in May we have fine March weather, and probably the middle of June may arrive to resemble our April. I fully intended to have written to Mr. Hooper a long letter; I must beg you to make my apology for not having already done so: but the conveyance of the post is liable to so much inspection, and the character of those who inspect the letters is so mean and suspicious, that I cannot trust the most insignificant of my thoughts in this channel.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 22nd May, 2nd June, 1778.

My Lord,—Your Lordship is not unacquainted with the altercation that passed at Czarsco-Zelo between Prince Potemkin and General Zoritz. The spirited behaviour of the latter had only a transitory effect; the complaisant and useful part Prince Potemkin acts got the better of every other consideration, and Mons. Zoritz, a few days ago, received his final dismission. It was conveyed to him by the Empress herself in very gentle terms, but received by him in a very different manner: forgetting to whom he was speaking, he was very bitter in his reproaches; painted this mutable conduct in the strongest colours, and foretold

* Mr. Hooper and Mr. Harris's father were first cousins, being sons of Lady Dorothy and Lady Elizabeth Ashley. Mr. Hooper died in 1795, at the age of ninety-five, without children, and left his estates to Mr. Harris.

the most fatal consequences from it. I am assured this language was felt, but it made no alterations in the plan laid down. Zoritz, with an increase of pension, an immense sum of ready money, and an addition of seven thousand peasants to his estates, is going to travel. His successor, by name Korsac, will not be declared till this journey takes place; the impetuosity of Zoritz's character making it not safe for any man to take publicly this office upon him while he remains in the country. Both court and town are occupied with this event alone, and I am sorry to say it gives rise to many unpleasant reflections, and sinks in the eyes of foreigners the reputation of the Empress, and the consideration of the empire.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 29th May, 9th June, 1778.

My Lord,—The interior of the palace affords a very singular scene. Zoritz, though most munificently rewarded, is not pacified; and, although dismissed, remains in town with all the honours of a favourite. The bold language he held to the Empress makes her cautious of irritating so turbulent a spirit; the uncertain and anxious state of her mind is incredible; Orlow, some days ago, remonstrated with her on the effects her conduct must sooner or later produce. She appeared for a moment reclaimed, and sent an order for Sabadowsky* to return to Court, fully intending to reinstate this plain and quiet man in his ancient post. Potemkin, however, who is thoroughly acquainted with her character, and who has more cunning for effecting the purposes of the day than

* A former favourite.

any man living, contrived to overset these good resolutions. Korsac was introduced at a critical moment, and, while I am now writing, Her Imperial Majesty is at a village of Potemkin's on the confines of Finland, endeavouring to forget her own cares and those of the empire in the society of her new minion, whose vulgar name of Korsac is already changed into the better sounding one of Korsakoff.

Sabadowsky, in the meanwhile, is arrived; and, as he refused coming till he was urged to it by Orlow himself, he calls on this prince to know why he was disturbed in his retirement. Such, at this instant, is the face of the Court; it may change before my letter is finished. I shall attempt to get as quick and as accurate intelligence as possible on these subjects, because, unfortunately, they influence too much the political system of the country. I can now only add, that the Grand-Duke feels this incorrect behaviour, and, from having been remarkably indiscreet, is become very reserved. Count Panin and Prince Orlow, formerly irreconcilable, are now intimate friends; and, through the means of the first, the latter stands well with the Grand-Duke, notwithstanding His Imperial Highness was brought up by Panin himself to look on Orlow as his greatest and most dangerous enemy.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 8th, 19th June, 1778.

My Lord,—The interior of the Court is not altered since I last wrote: Korsakoff enjoys all the affection and favour which attends novelty; it is foretold, however, his reign will be short. Zoritz is sunk into obscurity. Sabadowsky, as a reward for his coming to Court, is to have

a high office in the senate; this point is carried against Potemkin, who is in all others supreme: if his influence lasts, and the Empress does not exert that strength of mind which she indisputably possesses, very fatal consequences may happen.

A general discontent prevails; and, if public distress or misfortune should authorize the people to give vent to their complaints, it is impossible to say to what lengths, in a country like this, they may proceed. Count Panin and his brother, from their reputation of integrity, Prince Orlow and his brothers, from their popularity, are the only friends on whom the Empress can rely: all these are at present disgusted, and certainly will never stand forth while things remain as they are.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 20th, 31st July, 1778.

My Lord,—It will be my endeavour, in this letter, to submit to your Lordship's inspection my ideas on this country, as well relative to its greatness and resources, as to its present prevailing system of government. My description, from the little similitude it will bear to those given by others, will perhaps not entirely gain credit with your Lordship; but it is my duty to represent objects as they strike me, and your judgment will as readily correct, as your indulgence will forgive, my errors.

The immense extent of the Russian empire, and the security of its frontiers, doubtless render it a desirable ally, and almost an inaccessible enemy. The various ar-

ticles of commerce the rest of Europe must necessarily fetch from hence, and the very few which this country need receive from them, insures its independence and wealth. Russia, therefore, incontestably stands very high among the European powers; but it may be controverted whether it can come up to the high reputation it enjoys, or to the superiority it assumes. The advantages just mentioned are merely the effects of situation; they existed before this people were civilized, and will remain with them if they ever should return to that state of barbarity from which they have so recently emerged. To give an empire pre-eminence abroad, its political system should be uniform, wise, and steady. To make it respectable at home, fixed rules of interior policy should be established, and their administration should be secure and uncorrupted. I must confess, my Lord, since my residence here, my researches after such a system and such rules have been fruitless; and it is in vain that I have attempted to discover on what those high-flown encomiums of this government, which everywhere met my ear, were founded.

In an absolute monarchy, everything depends on the disposition and character of the Sovereign: my principal object, therefore, has been to investigate that of the Empress, and as well from my own observations, as from the relations of unprejudiced and well-informed men, it appears to me that she has a masculine force of mind, obstinacy in adhering to a plan, and intrepidity in the execution of it; but she wants the more manly virtues of deliberation, forbearance in prosperity, and accuracy of judgment, while she possesses, in a high degree, the weaknesses vulgarly attributed to her sex,—love of flattery, and its inseparable companion, vanity; an inattention to unpleasant but salutary advice; and a propensity to volup-

tuousness, which leads her to excesses that would debase a female character in any sphere of life.

If we recapitulate the events of the sixteen years which have elapsed since her accession, they will, I believe, on a fair and candid inquiry appear to be in great measure the effects of such a character. On tracing her operations in Poland, we shall find that, after having given a King* to that country, on no very laudable motive, she, by sometimes supporting his measures too violently, and, at others, by not supporting them at all, reduced that republic to a state of despair and anarchy; which, in the first instance, brought on herself the Turkish war, and, in its consequences, forced her into a connection that induced her to make a most unjustifiable treaty, which, besides leaving an indelible blot on her reign, has added force to the only two powers from whom she had anything to apprehend, and left them in future an influence in the Polish affairs equal to her own. What other evils the Turkish war may produce, it is difficult to foresee: the events are still depending; and that peace, which at first appeared as glorious as it was unexpected, has only proved an armed truce, and given time to the sinews of this country to relax and be enervated.

The turn affairs have taken in Sweden proves the Russian measures there to have been equally ill-concerted and ill-conducted. Confident of their own weight, they neglected the advice of their friends: four and twenty hours entirely overset the Russian interest at Stockholm; and Sweden, from being considered as a dependent state, is now become an object of fear and jealousy.

To counterbalance these facts, Her Imperial Majesty has concluded two alliances; the one with Denmark, the other with Prussia. From the first, no advantages have yet

* Stanislaus, who had been her lover.

arisen ; from the latter, this Court has been held for several years in a state of implicit obedience to that of Berlin, and now finds itself under the greatest distress, in order either to evade the purport of the treaty, or to fulfil it without increasing the evils which threaten this state. To enumerate these evils will not be a proper subject for this despatch ; they will find a place in the common course of my correspondence, and I wish the narration of them may not make one of its principal topics.

If we turn our reflections to the interior administration of Government, I fear the result of them will not be more advantageous. A mistaken lenity, arising either from fear or indolence, has subverted the great purposes of law and justice. The great men oppress their inferiors wantonly ; the inferiors pilfer and steal in security. From a conviction of this remissness, and from the specious pretext of the cruelty of their lords, we have seen a rebellion break out in the heart of the empire ; which, had it been led by men of judgment or courage, would have shaken it to its foundations. No troops were ready to make head against it ; a panic had seized half the country ; and the same spirit of sedition which animated Pugatscheff, had infected the rest. He was within a few days' march of Moscow, and the Court was near retreating to Riga, when, from want of resolution and conduct, he was defeated, and tranquillity restored to the empire. The sparks of discontent, however, are not yet extinguished ; and it is much to be apprehended, that, in case of any national calamity, they would blow out afresh. The want of proper attention in the civil magistrates, joined to the avidity of the officers in sending home their booty from the army, occasioned the plague to break out at Moscow in 1771. A hundred and forty thousand people perished ; and an archbishop, from the

most laudable exertion in his office, was pulled to pieces at the altar.

In opposition to these facts we may place the establishment of several colonies of emigrants from Germany, the institution of many useful seminaries for the youth of both sexes, and a very great generosity and munificence.

The code of laws, sketched out by the Empress herself in really a masterly manner, has never yet been digested; it remains as a deposit at the Academy, and many reasons render its being put in execution impracticable.

Such, I can venture to assert, is the real state of this empire. A thriving commerce and increasing revenue, owing to its unexhausted resources, and to the progress of civilization in its remoter quarters, would, under a wise administration, very soon restore it to its force and vigour. The vanity of the Empress, however, throws an obstacle in the way of this amelioration: having been taught by flatterers that Russia is the greatest empire in the world, and confirmed in this idea by the most fortunate successes, she never can be brought to see the situation of her country in its true light, till some great event calls upon her to stand forth; she then will feel her inability of acting that superior part she assumes, and from conviction will perceive the necessity of treating her friends with more attention, and her enemies with less levity, than she has hitherto done.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, August 10, 21, 1778.

My Lord,—The new favourite is very much on his decline. There are several competitors for his employment: some supported by Prince Potemkin; some by

Prince Orlow and Count Panin, who now act together; and some solely from the impression their figure has made on the mind of the Empress. Both parties unite to prevent the success of these independent men, but she seems strongly disposed to choose for herself. Potemkin, whose insolence equals his power, was so angry not to have the sole disposal of this office, that he absented himself from Court for several days. The fate of these young gentlemen still remains undecided, though it appears settled that Korsakoff should be sent to Spa for his health. As the small remains of decency kept up when I first came, have totally disappeared, I should not be surprised if, instead of one favourite, we should see several; and that the effects should by that means hasten the evils which even otherwise must inevitably fall on the empire.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 28th August, 8th September, 1778.

My Lord,—I have very good reason to believe that, in a few days, the present favourite will be discarded, and that he will be succeeded by a Secretary in Count Panin's office, by name Strackoff, a young man of character, but who, as well from his situation as from his figure and turn of mind, nobody ever considered as a candidate for this eminent post. He was noticed, for the first time, at a ball at Peterhorff, the 28th June, and he owes the great fortune to which he is so near being raised, to the free and unbiassed choice of the Empress; for although he is entirely dependent on Count Panin, yet I have the best grounds for saying, that this Minister

was not less surprised on hearing on whom the lot had fallen than the rest of the Court will be when the fact comes to their knowledge. It is yet a most profound secret, known to a very few people only, and I must humbly intreat your Lordship, for the sake of the person from whom I received the intelligence, to make quite a confidential use of it. If the connexion lasts, and becomes consistent, it must end in the fall of Potemkin: Count Panin's party and interest will increase; and if he continues to abide by the Orlows,* it may produce the most salutary effects to this empire.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 14th, 25th September, 1778.

My Lord,—I mentioned to your Lordship cursorily in my last, the return of Prince Potemkin into favour. He attempted, as long as he could venture, to oppose the choice of the intended favourite, and tried every means his cunning and ascendant over the Empress suggested to him. He dared even to threaten, and held the most unbecoming language; when, finding no effect from this behaviour, but that she determined to abide by her plan, he changed his tone to the most submissive possible; he begged and obtained pardon, and offered his services towards bringing it to bear in the most decorous and expeditious manner.

It will, perhaps, be not amiss to mention an anecdote, to show your Lordship how vigilant Prince * * * * is, to keep up his credit with the Empress. Her Majesty

* Orlow was very *Anglomane*, and Mr. Harris everywhere identifies British and Russian interests.

reproached him with the irregularity of his conduct with his niece, and the dishonour it brought on her Court. The same evening he prevailed on a Prince * * * * to marry her; they were betrothed with great pomp at the palace the day before yesterday, and the marriage is to be celebrated under the immediate auspices of the Empress. Count Panin has observed and still observes, on these occasions, the greatest propriety of behaviour; he affects to be above all Court intrigues, resolved, I believe, not to interfere till he is sure of doing it efficaciously.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 21st September, 2nd October, 1778.

My Lord,—Contrary to the expectation of everybody, Count Alexis Orlow arrived here last Wednesday. His coming has spread great consternation among the favourites of the day, particularly as he has been already closetted, more than once, with the Empress. Potemkin affects outwardly the highest good humour and indifference. I had the honour last night of playing at the Empress's table, where both these gentlemen assisted, and it is beyond the powers of my pen to describe to your Lordship a scene in which every passion that can affect the human mind bore a part; and which were, by all the actors, concealed by the most masterly hypocrisy. Count Alexis has been remarkably civil to me, and assured me he was as sincere a friend to England, as his brother, and not so indolent a one. Indeed, my Lord, I am at a loss to account for the remarkable civilities I receive from the Empress, the Grand Duke and Duchess, and from the chiefs of the different parties. I am upon my guard, as much as possible, and trust I have resolution enough not

to be hurried out of my duty by flattery; and a sufficient sense of the character with which I am invested, not to commit it, by mixing in any of the disgraceful intrigues with which I am surrounded, and for the embarking in which, I find myself so radically improper.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 3rd, 14th October, 1778.

My Lord,—I have been some time under a promise to give your Lordship all the information I could obtain, relative to the genius and character of the successor of this Empire, and I shall no longer delay putting on paper all I have been able to collect relative to that Prince.*

He was, from his infancy, entrusted to the care of Count Panin, and, under him, to Mr. d'Osterwald, a Livonian gentleman, now a Senator. I do not find that they laid down themselves any regular system of instruction, neither did they receive any from the Empress, who, though she has made the most salutary improvements in the education of her subjects, was not equally attentive to, nor anxious for, the success of that of her son.

He received from Mr. d'Osterwald a very competent notion of the interior Government of this country, and from Count Panin, a tolerable one of the modern history of Europe. He learnt from inferior masters the politer arts, and some pains were taken to instruct him in Philosophical inquiries. He reaped, however, little benefit from these; and as his person was awkward, and his address ungenteel, the greatest part of his time was employed in learning to dance, to ride, and to talk French;

* Afterwards Emperor Paul, and assassinated in the year 1801.

all which he does to a certain degree of perfection. I should not do justice to his preceptors if I was not to observe, that they inculcated into him no vicious principles, but, on the contrary, were very attentive to his moral character, and I really believe their wholesome lessons have corrected several natural deficiencies, and that he is a much better man than he would have been, if he had been left to himself.

Till his first marriage, he was kept in the most complete subordination: nobody but those expressly fixed upon by the Empress were admitted to his presence, and if he has any filial piety, he owes it rather to fear than to affection.

It appeared soon after his marriage with the Princess of Darmstadt, that she easily found the secret of governing him, and that so absolutely, that he dismissed the few companions that seemed to have been of his own choice, and in his society, his amusements, and his sentiments, was entirely directed by her. She scarcely allowed him the use of his mental faculties, and from being quick and lively, he became dull, heavy, and lethargic. She, in her turn, was governed by Count Andrew Rosamonsky, her paramour, now at Vienna, on his way to Naples; and he again received his lessons and the greatest part of his income from the Ministers of the House of Bourbon. The Empress saw and reprimanded this conduct in her daughter-in-law, but without effect; the young Princess was ambitious and resolute, and had not death stopped her in her career, there would probably have been a trial of skill between these illustrious personages.

As the present Grand Duchess's character is directly opposite to that of the late one, so the Grand Duke appears in a quite different light. She is mild, gentle, and imbibed with the strongest notion of the conjugal duties.

He is become conversable, cheerful, and assumes a will of his own. She, by every act of complaisance and attention, deserves his affection, and he is very fond of her. They are at present perfectly happy in themselves, but I fear their happiness cannot be durable, in a Court so unprincipled, and so singularly composed as this is. He betrays a levity that sometimes flatters the lady he addresses himself to; and she must be possessed of a very uncommon share of resolution and rectitude, if she avoids the many snares which will be laid in her way, and from which none of the Empresses of these dominions, without exception, have escaped.

His politics are now as Prussian as they were before French; and, unless he alters, he may make himself as ridiculous in his predilection for this monarch, as his father. His journey to Berlin, Count Panin's instructions, and the Grand Duchess's partiality to her own family confirm him in these principles. He is very temperate in his food, but still more in his drinking, and has, by these regularities, strengthened a constitution naturally infirm.

In a word, without a superior capacity, he has a sufficient portion of understanding, if he gets the better of a certain fickleness in his affections, and timidity in his actions, which may be only the effect of youth, and of his situation, to govern this country.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 5th, 16th Oct. 1778.

My Lord,—After having taken the greatest pains to learn whether Alexis Orlow came here at the express order of his Sovereign, and what has passed since his

arrival, I am at last enabled to inform your Lordship, as I think authentically, that the indiscreet marriage of his brother, and a desire to save the falling interest of his family, were the chief inducements for the journey he has undertaken. The situation, indeed, both of foreign and domestic concerns, left him under no concern about his reception; and he felt that a man of his tried loyalty and attachment to the Empress, must, at such a critical juncture, be welcome. The event has justified his opinion; both Her Imperial Majesty, and every body look up to him as the only man that can preserve, or rather restore, the honour and dignity of the empire; and I sincerely wish that these sentiments in his favour were strong enough to counteract the dangerous habits of dissipation and weakness, that have increased so rapidly on his Sovereign's mind since his absence. The following conversation I can vouch to be authentic. Your Lordship will feel how important for me it is, that a confidential use should be made of it. Soon after Alexis Orlow's arrival, the Empress sent for him, and after the highest encomiums on his character and the strongest expressions of gratitude for past services, she told him she had now one to require of him, of more importance to her repose than any she had yet asked him. "Be friends," said she, "with Potemkin; prevail upon that extraordinary man to be more circumspect in his conduct, more attentive to the duties of the great offices he fills; to endeavour to conciliate to himself friends, and not, in return for the regard and friendship I have for him, to make my life a continued scene of misery. For God's sake," added she, "seek his acquaintance, increase my obligations to you, by contributing to my private happiness, as much as you have done to the lustre and glory of my reign." If such a language from a Sovereign to a subject was uncommon,

the answer was equally so. "You know, Madam," said the Count, "I am your slave; my life is at your service; if Potemkin disturbs your peace of mind, give me your orders, he shall disappear immediately; you shall hear no more of him: but, Madam," added he, "with my character and reputation to engage in a Court intrigue, to seek the good-will of a person I must despise as a man, and regard as the greatest enemy of the state; your Majesty must pardon me if I decline the task." The Empress here burst into tears; Orlow withdrew, but returned in a few minutes, and went on by saying, "I know, Madam, beyond a doubt, that Potemkin has no real attachment for your Majesty; that he consults in everything his own interest alone; that his only superior talent is cunning; that he is gradually endeavouring to divert your Majesty from business, and lull you into a state of voluptuous security, in order to invest himself with the sovereign power. He has essentially hurt your navy, he has ruined your army, and what is worse, he has sunk your reputation in the eyes of the world, and alienated from you the affection of your faithful subjects. If you choose to get rid of so dangerous a man, my life is at your devotion; but if you mean to temporise with him, I can be of no use to you in the execution of measures where flattery, dissimulation, and duplicity are the most necessary qualifications." The Empress was much affected at this extraordinary speech; confessed her belief of all he said of Potemkin; thanked the Count in the strongest manner for his zealous offers, but said she could not bear the thoughts of such harsh proceedings; acknowledged an alteration in her own character, and complained of her health being essentially affected. She desired the Count not to think of leaving Petersburg, as she certainly should now want both his advice and his assistance.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 30th October, 10th November, 1778.

My Lord,—The interior of the Court every day affords a fresh scene, and the Empress's good sense and fine parts are destroyed by the eternal plagues Potemkin and her favourite create for her. Alexis Örlow is silent, and although he is treated with the most cordial distinction, yet his last conversation is not forgot. He remains here at the Empress's request.

I am treated still with the most uncommon civilities. Whether it is because they foresee they shall want us, or whether they may expect, by this means, to prevent my writing what I see and hear, I cannot pretend to say.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 16th, 27th November, 1778.

My Lord,—I have had several conferences with Count Panin on the great object of my instructions; I have not however yet opened myself fully, because I do not see a certainty of success. He admits the utility, even the necessity, of our being, sooner or later, allied, but will not allow the present moment a proper one for conciliating such a measure. He talks much of the effects of the joint mediation with France, and although he called a connexion with that Court a temporary one, yet, that it ties up their hands for a while. He is full of professions of good-will, and of assurances, that we may depend on the Empress's standing forth, whenever a proper opportunity offers.

I am preparing a paper, I shall deliver in to-day, and desire him to communicate it to the Empress; and as I am convinced that a great deal is kept back from her, I shall employ every means in my power, either to speak to her myself, or to convey my sentiments to her through some other channel.

I must again entreat your Lordship to allow me time; for although I do not flatter you with any hopes, yet precipitation would immediately ruin everything, and be attended with the most disagreeable effects.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 20th November, 1st December, 1778.

My Lord,—I delivered in the paper I mentioned to your Lordship in my last to Count Panin on Saturday; the Empress has been since confined to her room, and part of the time to her bed, and this serves as a pretext for making me wait for an answer. I have spoken to both the Orlows, and if their ability to serve me was equal to their will, my negotiation would very soon be terminated successfully. I shall still attempt some other means of getting to the Empress, and leave nothing untried on this important occasion.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT KEITH, VIENNA.

Petersburg, 4th, 15th December, 1778.

Dear Sir,—You will perceive from my last that I lost no time in acquainting you of this Court having agreed

to a Joint Mediation with France ;* if my letters often contradict each other, and if the intelligence I send you by one post, is directly opposite to that you receive from me the preceding one, it is not my fault ; the measures of this Court are so unsystematical, unconnected, and inconsistent, that such must be the character of all correspondence from hence. Count Kaunitz received the courier which brought the Empress Queen's acceptance of the mediation, Friday : I have seen the original paper, it is conceived in terms the most flattering to this Court, and, if I may be allowed to say so, very humiliating to that from whence it comes. As this style was totally unexpected, so it has given the most extravagant joy here ; they now look upon themselves as the greatest of all powers, and that all others must obey their nod.— Besides their having become more untractable than ever, I fear that a still greater evil will accrue from this Court, and that France will fully obtain her ends in making Russia perfectly indifferent, not to say worse, in our disputes. If we make use of the resources and strength God has given us, I trust we shall get out of them honourably alone ; I see no friendly countenances on the Continent, and much fear that the number of our enemies will be increased. I consider those as the *greatest*, who would persuade us to submit to peace on *dishonourable terms*.

DESPATCH FROM THE EARL OF SUFFOLK TO MR. HARRIS.

St. James's, December 15th, 1778.

SIR,—It is with singular pleasure I inform you that His Majesty means to confer upon you the Order of the Bath.†

* Respecting the disputed Bavarian succession.

† Mr. Harris was knighted by the Empress, March 20th, 1779.

The insignia thereof, and instructions relative to your investiture, will be transmitted by the first proper opportunity; but being apprised of His Majesty's gracious intentions, and permitted to make them known to you, a double motive concurs for this early communication—the satisfaction that arises to each of us from making and receiving it. I am, &c.

SUFFOLK.

About this time the Treaty of The Armed Neutrality against England was projected, and the principles involved in this measure have been ever since a source of perpetual irritation. The Empress was the author of it, and it became quite her hobby for a time.

A French author mentions that Mr. Harris lost his favour by a jest to the effect, that "Her Imperial Majesty's commercial navy was already the best guarded in Europe, as she had a man-of-war to each merchantman;" but the joke was Lord Hillsborough's, and the Empress involved the whole English government in the wrath which this pleasantry of one of its members excited.*

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 11th, 22nd December, 1778.

MY LORD,—I trust your Lordship will not tax me with negligence, if the messenger is not yet departed. I cannot prevail on Count Panin to give me an answer, and I depend so little on his promise of his enabling me to despatch him to-morrow, that I lose no time in acquainting your Lordship, that on Saturday last the Swedish Minister, after enlarging greatly on our conduct towards neutral ships, made a formal proposal to this Court to join

* Harris Papers.

with that of Stockholm, in forming a combined fleet, sufficiently strong to protect the trade of the north against the attacks made on it. Mr. Nolken added, that if the Empress adopted this plan there was no doubt but that Denmark would also subscribe to it, and that the commerce of these countries, now so interrupted, would be, by this means, carried on with security. I have reason to believe the idea of taking so violent a measure as that of *arming an united naval force* was immediately rejected, but that, that of the trade of these countries being illegally interrupted, and the necessity of devising proper methods for its better security, was fully admitted. If the Russian Minister should be weak enough not to discover the real motive for the conduct of his Swedish Majesty, and if, when he comes to talk to me about it, for he hitherto has been silent on this subject, he should endeavour, as he generally does, to palliate, or to argue it away, I think we may consider him, either from principle or incapacity, more in the interests of our natural enemies, than in ours.

A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 20th, 31st December, 1778.

My Lord.—Although Count Panin, as well in his written answer as in his conversation, connected the circumstance of our detention of neutral ships, with what passed relative to the alliance; yet, as it appears to me an object entirely distinct from it, I shall convey to your Lordship his sentiments on this subject in a separate despatch. I must premise that I communicated to him, as soon as I was in possession of it, the answer given by

your Lordship to the Ministers of the several Courts, who had spoken to you in London on this occasion, and that as he then seemed to approve the answer, and particularly as (in whatever manner His Majesty thought proper to act) it was evident to me no disadvantage would accrue to the trade of this country, I did not expect to hear any more about it. But in one of his last conversations he told me that he was obliged to express Her Imperial Majesty's wishes, that we should put a little more circumspection in our mode of proceeding against the ships of Neutral States ; that we should otherwise irritate powers now well disposed towards us ; that Denmark, Sweden, and Holland had respectively solicited the Empress to join with them in a representation to us on this subject ; and although I might be assured of her moving with the greatest delicacy in whatever would give us pain, yet he must candidly confess, she could not see with indifference the commerce of the north so much molested as it was by our privateers. That the vague and uncertain definition given by us to naval and warlike stores, exposed almost all the productions* of these parts to be sequestered; and that it became the Empress, as a leading power on this side Europe, to expostulate with us, and express her desire that some alteration might be made in our regulations on this article.

I replied, that I had flattered myself the declaration made by your Lordship to the Ministers of the several Courts in London, who thought their commerce unjustly interrupted, had been sufficiently explicit and sufficiently expressive of our equitable intentions, not to leave, even with them, the smallest room for complaint, but that I was greatly hurt and surprised to perceive there remained any doubts in Her Imperial Majesty's

* Iron, Lead, Hemp, &c.

mind on our behaviour on this occasion; that it was founded on the strictest principles of justice the circumstances would admit of, and entirely conformable to what had always been observed in similar occurrences, and that the definition of naval stores appeared to me to be clearly specified, if not by the letter, at least by the sense of treaties; and that, as His Majesty meant to adhere faithfully to these stipulations, he had a right to expect other Powers would be equally bound by them. Count Panin did not admit my reasoning; he said, smiling, that being accustomed to command at sea, our language on maritime objects was always too positive; that he wished rather we had followed the example of France. I told him, in the same style, that I did not expect to find in him even an apologist, much less a panegyrist of the conduct of the Court of Versailles, and that I was satisfied, if he would read over accurately the *règlement* of the French King, to which he referred, he would find it by no means worthy of the praise he bestowed upon it; that it was arbitrary, insidious, and unprecedented; that in regard to our superiority at sea, though I never knew we assumed any that did not belong to us, *Russia* certainly could not complain of our having ever made an ill use of it; and I subjoined, seriously, that I should be extremely hurt, if any formal remonstrance against the rule of conduct we had laid down, relative to the ships of neutral powers, should be made from hence, as I could assure his Excellency beforehand, it would only lead to disagreeable discussions, and give an appearance of disunion between the two Courts, at a time when it was so much the interest of our enemies to disunite us. He replied he was sorry to hear me say what I did, as he had actually the Empress's orders to prepare a representation, which, to

avoid charging me with a disagreeable commission, or procuring me any personal uneasiness, he had proposed transmitting to your Lordship through M. de Pouschkin. I thanked him for his obliging intentions; but added, that I by no means required this kind of *ménagement;* that whether it was the fate of my mission to transmit agreeable or unpleasant intelligence, I was ready to abide by it; and that if he would allow me to speak my mind, and if Her Imperial Majesty was positively determined, for the sake of Powers with whom she was less intimately connected than with us, to remonstrate on this occasion, I wished it might be done through me, and that in an amicable way, as well to prevent the *éclat* a step of this kind would certainly occasion, if it was mentioned to your Lordship through the Russian Minister at London, as to enable us to speak more confidentially than could be possibly done in reply to a Ministerial representation. It was with some difficulty I obtained this point.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 20th, 31st Dec. 1778.

My Lord,—Since the singular conversation I communicated to your Lordship 5th, 16th October, 1778, the Empress has gradually withdrawn her confidence and good-will from Count Alexis Orlow; she has refused him some trifling favours he asked for his natural son; and, finally, has forced him by her behaviour to have recourse to the method commonly used by Russians when they are not well at Court, that of staying at home, under pretence

of illness. This must be accounted for, by her having been weak enough to have repeated to Prince Potemkin, what had passed between them, and to his having been artful enough to have made it appear to her, as proceeding solely from personal ill-will and jealousy. Prince Orlow has not appeared at Court for these three months, and the language of both brothers, (and they speak their minds very freely,) is that of men disappointed, angry, and who foresee no hopes of reassuming their former stations.

Strackhoff, whom I have often mentioned in my late despatches, continues seeing Her Imperial Majesty in private, but bears no outward or ostensible mark of being a favourite. He was brought up in the house of the late Chancellor Woronzow, and placed about Count Panin by his principal *commis*, Mons. Bakounin, likewise connected with that family. Strackhoff is not a man of parts nor application; he is addicted to low buffoonery and low company, but his character is unimpeached, and I am told that now he is less dependent on them, his friends find him obstinate and untractable. The favourite of the day, who wears all the insignia and has the public honours of that office, is still the same Korsack; he is very good-natured, but silly to a degree, and entirely subservient to the orders of Prince Potemkin, and the Countess Bruce. These two seem now in quiet possession of the direction of the Empress's mind. He is supreme in regard to everything that regards either her serious or pleasurable pursuits; the other interferes only in the latter.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 11th, 22nd Jan. 1779.

My Lord, — Nothing material has occurred here since last week. The pacification in Germany seems to advance without interruption, and as this Court considers itself as the sole promoter of this salutary work, they see its progress with uncommon satisfaction. The small proportion of time Count Panin devotes to business is wholly employed on this subject, and he pays as little attention to the other concerns of this empire, as if he was in every respect indifferent to them. I am sorry to say, that the same kind of indolence gains ground with the Empress, and that I every day more apprehend that unpleasant change of sentiments here, which I mentioned to your Lordship. In her private life her Imperial Majesty becomes every day more relaxed and dissipated, and her society is often collected from the lowest degree of her courtiers.

The Empress's health is certainly affected from the life she leads; and the reflections she necessarily must make, whenever she allows herself calmly to consider the effects of her present conduct, must necessarily contribute to impair it. She continues to treat me with the most uncommon distinction, and I do not despair, sooner or later, to lead her to talk on business; till this happens, I must not expect to succeed in anything I undertake, since, besides a far superior understanding to any of her Ministers, she is the single person in her empire that retains any predilection for us.

The following was composed by the Empress of Russia, and sent by her to Mr. Harris, February, 1779.

POUR L'INFORMATION DE LA POSTÉRITÉ.*

INSCRIPTION

A mettre sur la première pierre du fondement de la Maison de Campagne de Monsieur le Grand Ecuyer Léon Nariskin.

Ici est la demeure
De Sir Léon Nariskin, Grand Ecuyer.
Aucun cheval fringant n'a à se plaindre de lui, car il n'en monta jamais.
Dans sa jeunesse Dame Nature promettoit de le rendre beau.
On ignore pourquoi elle ne tint pas parole.
Quand il s'agit de le marier, il épousa celle à laquelle il pensoit le moins.
Il aimoit le vin, les femmes, et la parure, cependant personne ne le vit ivre, amoureux, ni bien peigné.
Il se razoit lui-même crainte que le barbier ne le coupat,
Aussi plus la fête étoit grande, et plus on lui voyoit de traces du rasoir sur le visage.
Il cherchoit partout les avantures, et n'en trouvoit nulle part.
Ses amis disoient qu'il étoit fort respectueux au début, et perdoit patience par la suite.
Il dansoit beaucoup et étoit leste et léger en chaque occasion où l'embonpoint de son corps ne causoit diversion à sa jambe gauche pour suivre la droite.
Il étoit riche, et n'avoit jamais un sou dans la poche.
Il aimoit à aller au marché, où il achetoit volontiers ce dont il n'avoit pas besoin.
De tout son bien il affectionnoit le plus les cent toises que vous voyez.
Il se plaisoit à les hérisser de vuides bouteilles,
Nouveaux tous les ans, on y arrivoit par
Des sentiers tortueux, plantés
D'arbrisseaux, bordés de
Bassins, de ruisseaux qui
Etoient à sec, quand il n'y
Avoit pas de pluies.
Malgré cela, la plus grand partie de l'Eté il la passoit sur le grand chemin.
Réjoui et réjouir étoit sa devise
La joie son élément,
Les éclats de rire suivoient ses pas.

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* One of several *jeux d'ésprit* composed by her Imperial Majesty and sent to him at different times. They are all below par.

DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 29th Jan., 9th Feb., 1779.

My Lord,—The interior of the Court for this last fortnight has afforded, and still continues to afford, one constant scene of disorder and intrigue. The Empress having expressed her intention of changing her favourite, many competitors entered the lists. Strackoff's friends were in great hopes that he might be allowed to avow publicly the degree of favour which it is generally supposed he has so long enjoyed in private; but his own want of conduct, joined to his obstinacy, has rendered their schemes abortive, and it is probable Her Imperial Majesty would have fixed upon Lewaskow, Major of the Semenossky guards, if a young man, by name Swickosky, patronised by Madame Bruce, and put forward by her as a successor to Korsack, had not stabbed himself through disappointment. The wound is not mortal, and though great pains have been taken to conceal from the Empress the real motive of this rash action, yet it has given her the greatest uneasiness, and will probably be the cause of Korsack's remaining in his post till the spring is somewhat farther advanced. Potemkin and Madame Bruce now no longer act in concert; and so jealous is the Prince of the power this lady has acquired over his Imperial Mistress, that he is doing his utmost to supplant her by Madame * * *, cousin to the Marshal * * * *, and both from education, character, and principles, very like himself. Madame Bruce having unfortunately conceived a violent passion for Korsack, will facilitate him very much in the execution of his project. Should he succeed, the small remains of decency and decorum which still are outwardly observed at Court will totally disappear, and every hope

of the Empress's being reclaimed vanish. The Grand Duke and Duchess are treated by Potemkin and his set as persons of no consequence; he feels this slight, and is weak enough to resent it in his conversation, though he does not dare do more. The Grand Duchess behaves with greater prudence and circumspection, and, I believe, entirely regulates her conduct in consequence of letters she receives from His Prussian Majësty. In conversing the other day very seriously with the Orlows on these subjects, they both agreed that it would be by no means impossible for them to re-establish themselves in the Empress's favour; but they said her character was so different from what it was formerly, that they could never be sure of maintaining themselves; and that a step of this kind would necessarily make them an enemy in the Grand Duke, with whom it was of great importance they should keep well, as they foresaw the anxiety of the Empress's mind, and the irregular course of life she led, would shorten her days and put a premature period to her existence; that for this reason they were going to Moscow, purposing to live there in the most perfect retirement, ready at all times to stand forth whenever called upon, since, however altered the Empress might be towards them, they never could forget the obligations they owed her.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. HARRIS TO THE EARL OF SUFFOLK.

Petersburg, 1st, 12th February, 1779.

My Lord,—The Empress is gracious to me beyond measure, and I cannot help thinking she means by this extraordinary affability to mislead me. She has more than once spoken to me with great derision of the King of Sweden, and, no later than yesterday, told me she had two sentimental letters from that Monarch for these last three months in her pocket unanswered. Whenever I attempt to lead her to converse on our concerns, she is instantly silent or changes the subject. I shall endeavour to get a sight of the instructions given to the officer that is to sail with this small fleet; I think from them we may learn the real intentions of this Court.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

Petersburg, 5th, 16th April, 1779.

When I wrote last, I had reason to believe from Count Panin's language, that in a very few days I should have been able to have despatched the messenger; but, from what he said yesterday, I foresee his departure is still dubious. Your Lordship too well knows the tenour of this Court to be surprised at any delay; it is, however, now not entirely the effects of indolence or inattention. Our victories* in the East and West Indies have proved to them incontestably, that our national vigour and abi-

* The capture of Pondicherry and the French settlements on the coast of Coromandel, September, 1778. Previously in the West Indies things had gone against us.

lities are still entire. The difficulties which arise in the conferences at Teschen,* and the possibility of their ending unsuccessfully, alarm them for their own situation, and they feel, that instead of distributing peace to Europe, they may want (and that at a very near period) the assistance and good-will of so powerful a friend as England. Experience has convinced them that the fate of their negotiation with the Turks rests entirely on the issue of those depending in Germany, as the language of the Porte has regularly varied from pacific to hostile, as the appearances have been more or less favourable.

A very few days must determine this state of uncertainty, and the first courier from Prince Repnin† will decide the political system of this Court. Should he announce war, they will court our alliance, and I should suppose we may form it on easy terms. Should he bring tidings of peace, their vanity will be at its highest pitch, and we must wait for fresh events before we can reap any real advantage from them. I have, indeed, little doubt but that the Empress will be desirous of ending, by her intervention, the quarrel between us and France; but however good her own dispositions, or sound her own judgment may be, yet I have no reliance, either on the will or abilities of the instruments she must employ.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO HIS FATHER.

Petersburg, June 3rd, 1779.

HONOURED SIR,—I shall pay due attention to the Commission relative to Strabo: the book is at Moscow, to

* Held to settle the Bavarian succession.

† Russian Minister at Teschen.

which place I have written; if I can obtain the original I certainly will, if not I have no doubt but that the permission for collating it will be readily granted. As soon as I receive a positive answer I will write to you on the subject.

Our weather now is colder than I believe any part of your winter was. A large fire is not only welcome but necessary.

I have the good fortune to have made myself not disagreeable to the Empress. She notices me much more than any of my colleagues; more, indeed, I believe, than any stranger is used to. She admits me to all her parties of cards, and a few days ago carried me with only two of her courtiers to a country palace, where she has placed the portraits of all the crowned heads of Europe. We discussed much on their several merits; and still more on the great demerits of the modern portrait-painters, since in the whole collection, except one of our two eldest Princes done by West, there is not a single picture that has either design, colour, or composition. She calls this place *la Grenouilliere;* and it was for it that Wedgewood made, some years ago, a very remarkable service of his ware, on which a green frog was painted. It represented the different country houses and gardens in England. This, also, we were shown, and this led us to a conversation on English gardening, in which the Empress is a great adept. From this we got to Blackstone, where she soon led me out of my depth, as I believe she would many a Circuiter, being most perfectly mistress of our Laws and Constitution. This distinction from the Sovereign insures me the good will and civilities of the subjects; and, indeed, so used are they to adore what perhaps she only does not dis-

approve, that they carry this civility to a degree of troublesome excess.

I am, honoured Sir, with duty and love,
Your dutiful Son, J. HARRIS.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.*

Petersburg, 24th May, 4th June, 1779.

MY LORD,—The lead this Court takes in all the great transactions of Europe; the successes which attend every part of its public conduct, and at the same time the supineness and insufficiency of its administration, are facts so seemingly incompatible that, in a future day, they must appear incredible. To those who live out of Russia, and who only can form their judgment of it from the great events its interference and weight everywhere produce, it must appear as if it was conducted with superior judgment, and defective in no one essential point of its government. On the other hand, to those who reside in this Empire, and who perceive the unaccountable and imperfect manner in which all their plans are traced, and the improper instruments selected for their execution, it must be a matter of astonishment that they do not fail in everything they undertake. That they have not is evidently the work of chance; a fortuitous concurrence of interests, a state of confusion and anarchy, in which Russia was less involved than any other European power; and, if I may venture to say, a kind of preordination of good luck which attends every operation of this Court, has not only saved it from the most imminent dangers, but raised it to a degree of great-

* Secretary for Foreign Affairs after Lord Suffolk's death.

ness and power beyond that which even the ambition of its Sovereign could ever expect to attain. That these events arise from the cause I mention, and that Russia is at least in the momentary possession of this preponderance are facts I am satisfied your Lordship will readily admit; I therefore shall not dwell on them. The permanency of this superior influence is a matter of much greater doubt; and, in order to enable your Lordship as far as lies in my power to calculate its solidity and duration, I shall trouble you with a minute, though I hope not tedious, description of the character, temper, and principles of those who direct the Empire.

The Empress herself, long before she took the reins of the Empire into her hands, had prepared her mind to govern; with very fine parts, she employed the many leisure hours she had when Grand Duchess, in laying in those materials which made the seven or eight first years of her reign, one of the most brilliant periods in the Russian History. She then governed systematically, judiciously, and with dignity. We must date her first political error, from the moment she admitted His Prussian Majesty to assume such a weight in her councils. Soon after this followed the fatal division of Poland, the revolution in Sweden, and since, all those unnatural connexions and impolitic measures we have witnessed. But her private character and conduct received a still severer shock, when she dismissed Prince Orlow from her favour, as he himself, though not endowed with a bright understanding, was a man of integrity and strict honour; he kept her from all that destructive flattery she now hears with such avidity; and as she had a strong affection for him, she restrained, on his account, all those indecent feelings, to which, since, she has given such an extensive scope. Her court, from being conducted with the great-

est dignity and exterior decorum, has gradually become a scene of depravation and immorality. Their progress has been so rapid, that in the short term I have resided here, the manners and habits are most essentially changed. There is now no hope of her being reclaimed; and, unless a miraculous gleam of light breaks in upon her, at a time of life when it is almost too late to correct, we must not expect any favourable change either in her public or in her private conduct.

Prince Potemkin rules her with an absolute sway; thoroughly acquainted with her weaknesses, her desires, and her passions, he operates on them, and makes them operate as he pleases. Besides this strong hold on her, he keeps her in constant dread of the Grand Duke, and has convinced her, from the numerous friends and adherents he has made, that he is the only person who can discover in time, and protect her against, any undertakings from that quarter. He contrived, with infinite art, to destroy everything his most dangerous enemy, Count Alexis Orlow, said, by persuading the Empress, that he was got over by the opposite party; and he has rendered the Prince an object of compassion and ridicule by making her believe that his senses are impaired since a slight fit of the palsy, and by laughing at his inconsiderate and silly marriage. By following the same line of conduct, he has created a degree of distrust and contempt towards the other members of the Government. Count Panin and Prince Repnin, he describes as dependants on the Grand Duke; the Vice Chancellor, and several others whose names are unknown to your Lordship, he represents as mere drudges in office, and places them, in every way, below her Imperial Majesty's consideration. Thus, while on one side he flatters her ruling passion, on the other he keeps awake those fears which it is so natural she should

have, and effectually ensures to himself a more lasting tenure in his office, than generally belongs to the favourite of a despotic monarch. It would not be doing him justice if I did not say, he had a very superior understanding, a clear head, and quick conception; and if he would employ half the pains he takes in court intrigues towards governing the empire, we should soon see it on a very different footing.

Count Panin, towards whom the Empress never bore a cordial affection, now is become the object of her aversion; he, on his side, though so high in office, may be considered to go as great lengths in opposition, as, in such a country, man can venture to go. This want of confidence in him from his Sovereign, joined to his own strange character, make it very painful to do business with him; for though he has ever the words probity and frankness in his mouth, yet, I believe he seldom regulates his conduct by them; and although he has every possible outward appearance of what the French call *bonhommie*, I have had too many proofs of his *cunning*, not to be convinced that it makes a very marked feature in his composition.

I need only say a few words on the character and conduct of the Grand Duke and Duchess. He, from innate timidity, and from a levity of temper, which does not go off by age, is as incapable of justifying the fears Prince Potemkin inspires the Empress with, as I apprehend he one day will be of governing this immense and turbulent empire. She has every mark of a virtuous mind, and judicious conduct; but these are qualities no Empress of Russia ever carried with her to the grave; the criterion for her will be when her husband comes to the throne, or when he violates those conjugal ties he now observes with the most rigid severity.

Such, my Lord, I can safely say, is the present situation of this Court. When your Lordship compares it with my other letters, you will find a perfect analogy between the two descriptions. The effects of ideal greatness and inattention must ever be error and inconsistency.

I shall conclude this letter with saying a few words of what I more immediately believe to be the political sentiments of the Empress and her favourite. She herself, I am satisfied, was, and perhaps still is, as much English as Prussian; unfortunately His Prussian Majesty has had opportunities which never offered themselves to us, and *perhaps employed means we should reprobate to make use of.*

Prince Potemkin himself pays little regard to the politics on the West of Russia; his mind is continually occupied with the idea of raising an Empire in the east; he has so far infected the Empress with these sentiments, that she has been chimerical enough to christen the newborn Grand Duke, Constantine; to give him a Greek nurse, whose name was Helen, and to talk in her private society, of placing him on the throne of the Eastern Empire. In the meanwhile, she is building a town at Czarsco Zelo, to be called Constantingorod. I do not find that Prince Potemkin is *Prussian;* neither, from his conversation, is he *French;* it is, indeed, so desultory and interrupted, that though I often see him for a day together, I never can fix him for five minutes to the same subject. He by no means acknowledges the obligations to France, and says they put an end to their disputes with the Turks, merely from the apprehension Russia should have driven them out of Europe. I shall improve this idea, extravagant as it is, and have some faint hopes, from the self-sufficiency and natural arro-

gance of the French court, that it will lay so great a stress on the obligation conferred by them on this, that the Empress's pride will be hurt, and, her old anti-Gallican sentiments restored.

This is the only ray of comfort which presents itself to me. Could the most distinguished and uniform civilities from the Empress, and, of course, from all the leading people here, satisfy me, I should have little cause to lament; but I freely confess to your Lordship, that these are very insufficient for my feelings; and, unless some total revolution takes place in the sentiments of this Court, my mission here will become far from agreeable to me.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.

Petersburg, 24th May, 4th June, 1779.

My Lord,—I shall not give your Lordship the trouble of reading a long private letter from me; I cannot, however, omit saying that I am fully satisfied, as well from what I hear, as from my own experience, that we have nothing to expect from this Court in the common course of negotiation. The leading men here are too rich for corruption, too headstrong to be persuaded, and too ignorant to listen to plain truth and conviction. I have had lately very frequent opportunities of discoursing both with Prince Potemkin, and even with Her Imperial Majesty, and can venture to assure your Lordship, that none of those motives will operate on their minds; they are led by the impulse of the moment, by the immediate prospect fortuitous incidents afford them. The present reigning idea (and it carries away all others) is the es-

tablishing a new Empire in the East, at Athens or Constantinople. The Empress discoursed a long while with me the other day, on the ancient Greeks, of their alacrity and the superiority of their genius, and the same character being still extant in the modern ones, and of the possibility of their again becoming the first people, if properly assisted and seconded. She told me she talked this language to me as she knew my father* was an admirer of the Greeks, and that she hoped I inherited his predilection. I mention this, my Lord, not for the sake of repeating with ostentation the marks of distinction with which she honours me, but with a view of hinting to your Lordship that, if His Majesty should stand in indispensable need of assistance from this quarter, the only means of obtaining it is, by encouraging this romantic idea. She is now so warmly bent on it, that such a conduct, dexterously managed, would give us the firmest hold of this Court; and as its execution, whenever seriously planned, would instantly appear impracticable, we need not be apprehensive of having engaged ourselves too far in an unpleasant transaction. Having suggested thus much, your Lordship will improve on it as in your better judgment you should think proper; I must only entreat your Lordship to consider it as written in the greatest confidence, and submitted as a proof of my zeal not to be employed uselessly.

* Sir James Harris's father was one of the best scholars of his day, and obtained the highest literary reputation by his Hermes, and other philosophical works.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.

Petersburg, 14th, 25th, June, 1799.

My Lord,—The Prussian interest maintains its ground here, and the notions received from thence are, by no means, favourable towards us. The different maritime powers also, who in their commercial navigation wish to exceeed the bounds prescribed by neutrality, continue addressing their complaints to the Empress, and it requires my utmost attention, and constant labours, to prevent your Lordship from receiving very disagreeable remonstrances on this subject. It is, in the mean time, however, some satisfaction to me, to be able to assure your Lordship from good authority, that the instructions given to the Russian Naval Commander gone into the North Sea, are very strong and explicit; that he is not only ordered to keep those seas free from cruizers, but if he should meet any who had already taken a prize, to retake it, and, in case of resistance, to employ force.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO MORTON EDEN, ESQ., COPENHAGEN.

Petersburg, 18th, 29th June, 1779.

Dear sir,—From the knowledge I have of this Court, and from the influence it has over that where you reside, I am not surprised that the principal object of your mission should have been received in the manner you describe. Fortuitous circumstances, and a kind of pre-ordained good luck, have so confirmed them here in their notions of their own greatness and power, that nothing but some public calamity can restore them to a sense of their

real interests, and point out to them the part they should act. My instructions, like yours, have been to use my endeavours to obtain assistance from this Court; I shall think, however, that I have completed a very difficult task, if, instead of granting any such succours, I can prevent them from not manifesting a partiality towards that very nation they have all along considered as much their natural enemy as ours. The latitude the French allow themselves in their political conduct; the art they have of conveying the most agreeable flattery to a mind which, though replete with great qualities, is still a female one, has given them a footing here which they never could have expected to possess under the reign of the present Empress. It is my duty to counteract this dangerous seduction; but, as they must be disturbed from their golden dream, and hear many plain and disagreeable truths before they can be effectually brought to bear, I confess to you, confidentially, my despair of success.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.

Petersburg 5th, 16th July, 1779.

My Lord,—From a most unpardonable, though by no means uncommon indolence in Count Panin, the Empress received the first information of the Spanish* declaration from the Hamburgh Gazette. She was much displeased at this negligence, spoke very harshly to her Minister when he brought her the official papers late next morning, and said she was surprised that Mons. Pouschkin did not sufficiently see the importance of this incident to have

* Spain declared war against England on the 28th of June, 1779.

made her acquainted with it by a more speedy conveyance than that of the common post. The same day, she talked to those about her with great warmth and feeling, as well on the conduct of Spain as on *our* critical position; expressed her highest approbation at the spirited and loyal addresses of Parliament, and said that the Spaniards had acted unwisely in provoking such a nation as ours.

On Monday, at the play at Peterhoff, (where, contrary to the usual custom, she has permitted me and my family to be present,) she came up to me, between the acts, and with great eagerness asked me whether I had not received a courier; whether I could not inform her of more particulars than those the public were acquainted with, and seemed to take a much greater share in our concerns, and to see them in a very different light, from what her Minister wishes to make me believe she does. I replied to Her Imperial Majesty, that I had not received any messenger, and that the event had happened so immediately before the departure of the post, that my letters could contain nothing but the mere matter of fact. The reflections, however, which would arise from them were very obvious; they were of a very serious nature; there appeared to be a kind of *crusade* forming against us, and that if we were now abandoned by the only great power in Europe, adequate to counteract the operations of this formidable league, I scarce knew whether our exertions, great as they certainly would be, could enable us to stand against it. Her answer was, "I always was, and always shall be, the firm friend of England; Spain charges you with a hundred motives of complaint, but she has not proved a single one. The hostile measure that Court has adopted gives me great concern, but your resources and national spirit are great; and be assured that nothing can be sincerer than my friendship for England." The play

then continuing, the conversation was interrupted, and I have not since had an opportunity of talking with the Empress. I have, however, spared no pains to prejudice those about her in our favour; but as I cannot as yet tell the success of my endeavours, I shall make this the subject of my next letters.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO MORTON EDEN, ESQ., COPENHAGEN.

Petersburg, 4th, 20th July, 1770.

DEAR SIR,—I wish I could foresee any other advantage likely to arise from the indulgent manner in which I am treated here, except merely personal ones. I am indeed fully satisfied Her Imperial Majesty at this moment has strong feelings in our favour; that she beholds with great concern the number of our enemies increase, and, as well for our sake as for the preservation of the political system of Europe, sees the necessity of her not being an indifferent spectator in the present scene. Could I do business directly with her, I am sure she would not long remain inactive, but her Ministers, either through indolence or from some still more blameable motive, are not impressed with the same sentiments. Count Panin is by no means our friend; he receives every idea from His Prussian Majesty, and adopts it without reflection or examination. As he stands high in the opinion of the Court where you reside, I must entreat you not to drop the smallest hint of what I say; but if ever I effect anything, it must be without his intervention or knowledge. From this you will immediately see the difficult and delicate task I have to perform, particularly (speaking still most confidentially) as I *am without a single instruction from home*; the exigencies of the times, however, require

extraordinary exertion, and I shall act accordingly, without dreading either a disavowal or disgrace.

[Sir James Harris being now convinced that nothing was to be done through Count Panin, who, paid by Prussia, withheld the official statements, and misrepresented the official proposals to the Empress, resolved, if possible, to see her himself, and to create a certain channel of communication between his Government and Her Imperial Majesty. With these views he courted Potemkin, and succeeded in establishing a personal and political friendship with the favourite. The main object of *both* was to turn out Count Panin. Potemkin hated the Minister, whose power was nearly as great as his own, and Sir James Harris knew him to be a decided partisan against British interests. Potemkin was for any policy which baulked his rival, and had naturally a dislike of the French.]

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.

Petersburg, 7th, 18th August, 1779.

My Lord,—The Empress having permitted my sister to return home on board a Russian frigate* Her Imperial Majesty sends to England to fetch Lord Orford's collection of pictures, I take this opportunity of writing to your Lordship a few lines by a conveyance safer than that of the common post.

The sentiments of the Empress herself, I am convinced beyond a doubt, are by no means unfavourable to us, and if those about her person did not hold out to her the dangers to which she would expose her empire by taking

* The frigate was lost, and Miss Harris could save nothing but her despatches.

an active part in our concerns, I am satisfied she would not long remain an indifferent spectator of the present war. As long, however, as she pays any attention to what she hears from Count Panin, we must not expect any material alteration in her conduct; for, besides the little goodwill this Minister naturally bears us, he is entirely at the devotion of His Prussian Majesty, whose sentiments relative to us are very well known, and which at this moment are enforced by the strong motives he has for keeping well with France; and indeed I am sorry to say, that on more intimate acquaintance with Count Panin I find that he enjoys a reputation very different from his real character, and that he has neither the capacity, sincerity, or political principles, the public suppose to belong to him.

As I have long since despaired of effecting anything of consequence through him, I have for some time past been endeavouring to work up Prince Potemkin, and, I trust, not entirely without success. He has a very acute understanding, boundless ambition, and, luckily, an inveterate hatred for Mons. de Panin.

There is nothing new in the interior of the Court. It is expected every day that one Stianoff will succeed Korsakoff as favourite; an event of no importance to anybody but the parties concerned. They are both creatures of Potemkin's choice, and the alteration will only serve to increase his power and influence, without in any shape whatsoever affecting the public. Stianoff, like Korsakoff, is selected from the inferior officers.

The Empress still continues to distinguish me in the most remarkable manner. I am generally named of all her parties, and have had this year the honour of walking several times with her, in her gardens at Czarsco Zelo; distinctions none of my colleagues ever experienced. Your

Lordship will do me the justice to believe that it is not from vanity I mention these facts; it is merely to inform your Lordship of the advantages I owe to my ministerial character.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.

Petersburg, 13th, 24th August, 1779.

My Lord,—The instructions given to the captain of the frigate are, to answer any questions that may be put to him, but neither to suffer himself to be *stopped* or *searched;* and, if any attempt of this kind should be made, to employ force, and, if equal to it, to take the ship which opposes him and carry her into port, where he is to wait for orders. The Empress herself added, that these instructions were to regard French and American cruizers only; those belonging to England were to be considered as perfect friends, and every explanation to be given to them. And indeed, my Lord, on this occasion, as on many others, I could wish Her Imperial Majesty's Ministers as well disposed towards us as she herself is.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.

Petersburg, September 9th, 20th, 1779.

My Lord,—If on reading the following lines it should appear that I have not entirely met the ideas of His Majesty and of his confidential servants; that I have given too great a latitude to my full powers, and not entirely fulfilled the principal object of my mission; I must entreat your Lordship to believe, that I should not

have ventured to have taken, on so important a subject, so much on myself, if it had not seemed to me that the exigencies of the times required unusual efforts; and at a moment when our enemies deviated from every principle of public faith and national decorum in their endeavours to sink and distress us, it was lawful, on our side, to employ every honourable means to procure ourselves friends. Your Lordship will be pleased to recollect what I have so often said, of the predisposition of this Court, the various prejudices I had to combat with, and, in the present instance, that I have been obliged to act in direct opposition to some of the leading members of the state, and this without a person to consult, without any direct instructions from home, and entirely unassisted, except by the feeble resources I could find in my own judgment and experience.

I flatter myself this apology will not be considered as superfluous; I should not have troubled your Lordship with it if I had not been apprehensive that my zeal for His Majesty's service and the welfare of my country might have hurried me too far.

Having already given your Lordship an account of what passed between me and Count Panin on my delivering to him the Spanish Manifesto,* it is unnecessary for me to repeat it; it is sufficient to say, that in several conversations I have had with this Minister, he has ever held the same language, and advanced the same opinions. As, however, I had reason to believe that the conduct of His Catholic Majesty struck the Empress in a very different light from that which her Minister chose to express to me, I was resolved to apply to Prince Potemkin, as the only person who could, from his weight,

* In this conversation Count Panin openly showed his bias in favour of our enemies, and censured our pride and maritime tyranny.

give activity to such favourable sentiments if they actually existed. Some time passed, however, before it was in my power to address myself to him unaffectedly. The 28th June an opportunity offered itself in the Empress's antechamber, when I told him that the moment was now come when Russia might act the greatest part in Europe. That Russia alone was adequate to the acting such a part, and that he alone was adequate to direct the conduct of it; that the situation in which we stood was so critical, and the designs of our enemies so evident, that it was impossible to suppose the Empress could see with indifference the events of the present war. He told me there needed no eloquence or deep logic to persuade him of the truth of what I said; that neither Her Imperial Majesty nor himself were deficient in their goodwill, but that the event was too recent for the Empress to have thought it over maturely; and that, if I would have a little patience, he would soon speak to me more fully; in the meanwhile, I should do well to turn in my thoughts the most advisable method for Her Imperial Majesty to appear on this occasion. He then was pleased to pay me a most flattering personal compliment, by saying the Empress had the greatest confidence in me, and that she would listen to what I said as readily as if it came from one of her own Ministers. This emboldened me to ask a very uncommon, and, till now, ungranted favour, namely, *that of being allowed to converse with Her Imperial Majesty myself on business.* He told me he would endeavour, however unusual and novel such a step would be, to procure me this satisfaction, but premised the necessity of its being a profound secret. He then left me, saying he would soon find an opportunity of speaking to me more fully.

On the following Friday he appointed me to dinner at

a country-house of his nephew, where no one was present but part of his own family and dependants; and there, my Lord, we discoursed very amply, as well on the critical position in which England stood, as on the influence the consequences of the present war necessarily must have on the balance of power, and of the means the most efficacious to be used to prevent a general disorder taking place, or at least to counteract the operations of the force of the House of Bourbon united against England alone.

As I certainly said nothing that has not suggested itself to your Lordship, it is needless for me to transmit to you what passed between Prince Potemkin and myself on the first of these subjects. Indeed I take upon me very little merit in bringing him over to my opinion. He was so well-informed, and thought so judiciously, that there remained very little for me to convince him of; as the means to be employed, however, was a delicate task, it required, in discussing them, more attention and circumspection. I well knew that *a proposal of alliance* (at this conjuncture) would be rejected; I also felt that an urgent demand for *assistance* carried with it an air of solicitation and humility I did not like to assume; I therefore proposed, as the only measure that remained which could meet the ideas of my Court, and which would flatter the dignity of this, that the Empress should make a strong *Declaration* at Versailles and Madrid, and second this declaration by an armament of all her naval force. That this declaration should be framed, not so much on the separate and immediate concerns of England, though to these Her Imperial Majesty was very far from being insensible, as on those which regarded the welfare of Europe in general. That it should set forth, that as long as Spain had continued to offer its mediation, Her Imperial Majesty, from a possibility of

an accommodation taking place, forbore her interposition; but all such hopes disappearing the moment the Court of of Madrid changed its character from a mediating to a belligerent power (on motives unexpected and distinct from those of France), Her Imperial Majesty could no longer be silent, or see with indifference a war carrying on in Europe, which threatened the most fatal effects to the general political system. That the necessity of the naval armament going hand in hand with this declaration, was evident; that it would otherwise produce no effect, and be considered as a mere demonstration, meaning nothing; that, on the other hand, I was convinced, if the declaration was properly drawn up and properly sustained, it would instantly change the face of affairs.

The Prince seemed struck with this idea; he admitted the propriety of it, and did not doubt its efficacy; but said—and here, my Lord, I come to a very confidential and singular part of his conversation: "Who shall we trust to draw up this declaration, or to whom for preparing the armament? Count Panin has neither the will nor the capacity to serve you; he is *Prussian*, and nothing else. Count Czernichew (at the head of the admiralty) is a villain, and would betray any orders given him; nothing can be done with either of these, yet they preside at the head of the departments through which the whole must pass."

I proposed, in answer, that as I wished the transaction to be his alone, and that he should share the honour of it with nobody, the declaration might be drawn up under his eye; that he might carry it when done, himself, to Count Panin, as from the Empress, whose orders he very well knew how to enforce. That as for the equipment of the ships, I understood, in the last war, Her Imperial Majesty always settled this with the

Admiral who was to command them; that the same measure might be observed now, which would not only prevent any tricks being played by the person he mentioned, but also avoid giving any umbrage to the Grand-Duke, who possibly, as High-Admiral, might be offended if not consulted on this occasion. He replied: "You seem to have made good use of your time in this country, and to understand it perfectly well."

There now remained for me to ask him whether I should ever be admitted to converse with Her Imperial Majesty; he said, "undoubtedly; that she was not only willing but desirous to hear me, particularly if I would not approach her with the mask and cunning of a foreign Minister, but with the sincerity and frankness of a good and honest Englishman. I assured him I never wore the mask he spoke of but when I had to do with artful and insidious people; that before Her Imperial Majesty I was ready to open my whole heart, convinced that I could not do my country a more essential service than by letting her see in me a sentiment which prevailed throughout the whole nation; that as I was very impatient for this honour, I hoped Her Imperial Majesty would fix an early day. He assured me she would.

Near a fortnight, however, elapsed before I was admitted to this honour in private. I had, indeed, from the vicinity of my country-house to Peterhoff, the advantage of seeing Her Imperial Majesty almost every day, and it was with singular pleasure I observed she expressed a great curiosity for news from England, and a very sincere wish that it should be favourable. On Monday, 22nd July, at the masquerade given in honour of the Grand-Duchess's birthday, some time after Her Imperial Majesty's card-party, at which I had assisted, was finished, Mons. Korsakoff came up to

me, and, desiring me to follow him, conducted me a back way into the Empress's private dressing-room, and, on introducing me, immediately retired. The Empress, after making me sit down, began of her own accord, by saying, that, after her own affairs, ours were those she had the most at heart; that they lately had occupied very seriously her attention; that she was ready to hear what I had to say concerning them; and should be happy if I could obviate the obstacles which ever presented themselves to her mind in every plan she had formed to be useful to us. I told her that, under the entire conviction that I was speaking to the most powerful and best friend England had, I should take the liberty of opening my mind very freely, without apprehending that, in attempting to perform the duties of a faithful subject, I could offend her Majesty, who so perfectly fulfilled those of a great Sovereign. She assured me, that if she had not been well-disposed to hear all I had to say, and that if she had not also a particular regard for me, she never could have been brought to see me in so unusual a manner; she therefore desired I would speak without reserve, that she would hear both my sentiments and counsels, if I had any to give. Thus encouraged, I endeavoured, to the best of my abilities, to set before her eyes the present state of Europe in general, and in particular that of England.

The Empress asked me whether I had any instructions for so doing, or any particular proposals to make. I told her my constant instructions were, to cultivate and to solicit her friendship; of course, that I completely fulfilled them in holding the language I did; that Her Imperial Majesty well knew the various proposals I had made through Count Panin, since my arrival, and that, although they had been all negatived, yet, if Her Imperial Majesty

was now disposed to listen to them, I could take upon myself to renew them; but, if I might venture to speak, none of them appeared to me to come up to the urgency of the moment, and the only measure which struck me as consistent with the greatness of her reputation, and adequate to the present purpose, was, that Her Imperial Majesty should make a strong and spirited Declaration to the Courts of Versailles and Madrid, and support such a Declaration by an immediate considerable naval armament; that this would effectually answer the end required; it would restore equality to the war, and, by relieving the other European Powers from the apprehensions of standing single, permit them to take each the part in the present dispute their natural interests and sentiments led them to do.

The Empress, who had heard me with great attention, replied, that she admitted everything I said relative to the situation of Europe; that she saw the critical position in which we stood, and felt, both from political motives and from her own particular sentiments, the strongest desire of serving us; that she was withheld from it merely from the reluctance she had of plunging her empire into fresh troubles, and probably either ending her reign in a state of war, or else of committing herself to all Europe; that she had the highest opinion of our national strength and spirit, and did not doubt that we should still overmatch the French and Spaniards. Her Imperial Majesty then discoursed on the American war, lamented our not having been able to stop it in the beginning, and hinted at the possibility of restoring peace by renouncing our struggle with our Colonies. I asked her, if they belonged to her, and a foreign power was to propose peace on such terms, whether she would accept it? She replied, with great vehemence, "J'aimerais mieux perdre ma tête."

"Admitting what you say," replied she, "what right have I, after all, to interfere in a quarrel foreign to my own concerns, on a subject I am not supposed to understand, and with Courts at such a distance from me?" I answered Her Imperial Majesty by saying, that if, in the last century, a Sovereign of Russia had held this language to me, I should have been puzzled for a reply; but since Russia was become a leading power in Europe, the answer was obvious; she was too great to see any great events with indifference; the concerns of Europe were now the concerns of Russia; and France and Spain, by their conduct in the last Turkish war, clearly proved the truth of what I said; and that when their conduct at that period was compared with ours, I thought Her Imperial Majesty needed no other reason to dissipate any doubts she might have of the propriety of her interference. Finding her animated by this language, I went on by saying that such an interference would carry the glory of her reign to its highest pitch; and that, if Peter the Great could see the navy he had created now become considerable enough, not only to unite itself to that of England, but to assist it in maintaining the superiority of the sea, he would confess that he himself was not the greatest sovereign Russia had. She seemed much pleased with this idea, and assured me she had the strongest desire of assisting us, and that, although I had removed some objections, very powerful ones yet remained; she wished, however, I would send in my sentiments in writing, and promised me she would leave nothing unthought of. Our conversation having now lasted upwards of an hour, she dismissed me, and it being quite dark, it was with some difficulty I found my way through the intricate passages back to the ball-room.

The next morning, through Prince Potemkin, I de-

livered to Her Imperial Majesty the paper A, and the following day, July 24th, when I had the honour of supping with the Empress at the Master of the Horse, Nariskin, with a small society, in her way to Czarsco Zelo, she took an opportunity of telling me, that both what I had said and written had struck her exceedingly; her expressions were, "Depuis notre conversation, je n'ai fait que rêver à vos affaires; ma tête fermente, et si je puis trouver les moyens, vous verrez l'empressement avec lequel je vous servirai." She then turned to the company, and very good-humouredly said, "You must not be surprised if I have secrets with Sir James Harris; we were neighbours in the country, and neighbours always have secrets."

On the Monday following, July 29th, Her Imperial Majesty permitted me to walk with her in the gardens at Czarsco Zelo, and although she talked of our affairs in general in the most amicable terms, yet the presence of the Grand Duke and Duchess, who kept constantly behind us, prevented her entering into particulars.

The same evening I had an opportunity of conversing with Prince Potemkin, when nothing new passed, except my informing him that I had reason to believe Count Panin was acquainted with my having applied to him, and from the knowledge I had of the character of that Minister, I was satisfied he would do his utmost to prevent my application being attended with success. He told me he knew it very well, and that, although in general the Empress was very seldom biassed in her opinion by anything which came from that quarter, yet unfortunately, as she was now undetermined, I should do well, if possible, to discover the arguments Count Panin meant to use, and to prepare myself as well as I was able to answer them. A few days afterwards, I

received intelligence that the Empress had determined to order each member of the council, *separately*, to give in his opinion on our affairs, requiring of him to say how far, and in what manner, she could, consistent with the welfare of her own subjects, afford us any assistance; that she had begun with Count Panin, as head of the Foreign Department, and that he would deliver in his sentiments in writing in a few days.

It now became of the greatest importance for me to be acquainted with the turn he meant to give to his arguments; for though I well knew they would be adverse to our cause, yet I could not precisely tell the manner in which they would be drawn up. By employing various means, unnecessary to repeat to your Lordship, I luckily obtained an abstract of this opinion, by which I found that, after deducing from a general view of the situation of Europe (in which he calls the King of Prussia a *sentinel* of the Russian Empire, and that this monarch is contented to act a second part in order that the Empress might act the first), that it was as much for the well-being of Russia to keep on terms of friendship with France as with England, and that, under the present circumstances, for her own safety she ought not to interfere. He goes on by endeavouring to prove that the conduct of Great Britain, these last ten or twelve years, by no means entitles us to any particular attention from Russia; and that, even admitting the propriety of an interference on the part of the Empress, he does not think England yet in a situation to make such an interposition in its behalf necessary. He then draws a parallel between the present and the late war, and concludes by saying, that even if we should be worsted, we shall only be where we were at the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

Being thus fully instructed of the sentiments of Count Panin, I immediately drew up the paper B, which I con-

veyed to the Empress, through Prince Potemkin, nearly about the day I supposed Count Panin would give in his opinion. I endeavoured, also, to enforce these sentiments in a conversation I had with Prince Potemkin; and as I began to suspect that great part of what had passed between Count Panin and me, and even between him and my predecessors, reached but very imperfectly the Empress's ear, I recapitulated to Prince Potemkin every part of our conduct from Her Imperial Majesty's accession to this day, &c., &c. I concluded by saying, that I now asked no more at the hands of Russia than we had granted, unsolicited, in the course of the last Turkish war; for while Russia had to do with the Turks alone, we contented ourselves (convinced of her being more than a match for such an enemy) with affording our general good offices and assistance; *but whenever France or Spain made any show of opposing her, we immediately stood forth; and twice, by holding a proper language to these restless Courts, and by a well-timed arming of our navy, we not only saved from destruction the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean, but probably Europe from a general war.*

Prince Potemkin, who, contrary to his usual custom, had heard me without interruption, told me, when I had finished speaking, that he had been so little conversant in foreign affairs that a great deal of what I said was entirely new to him; that he should make use of it in discoursing with the Empress, whose thoughts were constantly occupied with our concerns, and who certainly would already have subscribed to what I proposed, if persons ill-disposed towards us, and high in office, were not perpetually raising doubts in her mind, and representing to her that her interference would be highly prejudicial to her own empire, and not even operate those salutary effects towards us I attributed to it.

He said, that though he himself was very far from blaming our conduct towards Russia, yet he strongly advised us, in any future plans we might propose, for connecting the two Courts, to be particularly attentive to the personal character of the Empress, and not leave any room for our ill-wishers to say, we treated her with inattention, *fierté*, or *froideur*,—accusations they were continually laying to our charge, and which the Empress was sometimes inclined to give credit to. He added, that as she was as yet come to no resolution, I must wait with patience, and although he was sorry to see the season advancing so fast without anything being determined on, yet it was not in his power to forward the decision. Her Imperial Majesty intended to hear the sentiments of her Council of State, and till then would certainly not be influenced in her opinion, by the advice of anybody.

The Court still remaining at Czarsco Zelo, and a fortnight's fast intervening, I had no opportunity of seeing either Her Imperial Majesty or Prince Potemkin, till the end of August. I was, however, sorry to find that Count Panin employed this time very much to our disadvantage. He held out to the Empress a certainty of France addressing itself to her for her mediation, and urged not only the impropriety of joining with us, but even the necessity of letting drop every appearance of Her Imperial Majesty's intending such a measure; that what had passed already, caused a great sensation in foreign Courts, and if she continued showing such demonstrations of good-will in our behalf, France would no longer have any confidence in the impartiality of her conduct; he, therefore, entreated Her Imperial Majesty to desist from her intention of asking the sentiments of each member of her Council, since such a measure could not possibly be secret, and would certainly produce, when known out of the empire, the

most disagreeable effects. He added, that all I said was out of my own head; that I had no instructions for what I did; and went so far as to assert, that he had reason to believe there would be a change of Ministry in England, and that probably everything I advanced would be disavowed.

Luckily I had foreseen, and anticipated this language in my note B,* and I am happy to tell your Lordship, that part of his reasoning had not the least effect on the Empress. I wish I could say the same of the rest; but it is certain a good deal of what he said sunk deep into her mind, and as I could not be supposed to know what had passed, it was out of my power to refute his arguments.

In this disposition the Court returned to town on Saturday, 30th August; and as I felt myself, from so long a silence on so important a subject, justly liable to your Lordship's censure, I was determined to have a final conversation with Prince Potemkin; and as the approach of winter in these climates now gave me no longer hopes of effectuating anything this year, at least I was willing, if possible, to lay a foundation that something might be done early the next. I could not get him to fix an earlier day for seeing me than Friday, September 6th, when I waited on him in the afternoon, and when, to prevent any interruption, he carried me into a private apartment, the Empress calls her Hermitage. I told

* In this and another paper put in by Sir James Harris, he appeals to the vanity and ambition of the Empress, as much as to her political interests, to prevent England from being isolated and overmatched by a combination of powers naturally inimical to Russia. Catherine, although partial to Great Britain, was not sorry to see her engaged in a war which occupied and weakened herself, France, and Spain, whilst she, Catherine, matured her projects upon Turkey. She was sometimes alarmed at the idea of our being crushed, and at such moments almost determined to assist us; but whenever we gained an advantage her selfish policy prevailed over fears and partiality.

him I was much concerned to find, that notwithstanding the inclination of the Empress herself, and his good disposition to serve us, the advice and opinions of persons, certainly of inferior capacity, and, as I had till now imagined, of much less weight than himself, had prevailed: they had, by preventing Her Imperial Majesty's immediate interposition, left us to stand another year alone against our numerous enemies, &c., &c.

He replied, the Empress was fully convinced of this, and he could assure me she would be actuated by her own sentiments and feelings; that as the autumn was now begun, I should do well not to hurry her; the desire of serving us had taken root in her mind, and the business would there work itself out, better than if I was to attempt to forward it. He therefore advised me, for the present, merely to be upon my guard against the intrigues of my colleagues, who, he said, as well from being jealous of the distinctions I received, as from other motives, would certainly do all in their power to defeat my undertakings. He then turned the conversation on other subjects, and although I remained with him the greatest part of the evening, I recollect nothing he said, worthy communicating to your Lordship.

It remains with me, my Lord, to say, that although from the appearances things wore in the beginning of this business I conceived great hopes of immediate success, yet this now is no longer to be expected. There is, however, a possibility, I think even a probability, of something being done next spring, and a certainty, as far as the assurances of the Empress herself can constitute one, that the Bourbon interest neither has nor is likely to gain ground here; an event which, if I had not had recourse to the expedients I have mentioned, was on the eve of taking place.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.

Petersburg, 9th, 20th September, 1779.

My Lord,—There is nothing very material passing at this moment in the interior of the palace. The present favourite, who, it was foretold, would lose his post almost as soon as he obtained it, still possesses it ostensibly; and, though common report gives him every day a successor, I am very much inclined to believe Her Imperial Majesty does not choose to furnish every year fresh matter of conversation for the public. The interests of the inferior agents are continually fluctuating; but this does not in any degree affect the main conduct of the Court, which is entirely directed by Prince Potemkin, who continues to enjoy the first place both in his Sovereign's confidence and regard. He was formerly a good deal influenced by his second niece, but since her marriage with a Prince Galitzin, his eldest, Alexandra Engelhart, seems to have a still greater power over him. She is a young lady of a very pleasing person, of good parts; a very superior aptitude in conducting a Court intrigue, and has a very just notion of the value of presents. She has already contrived to work Countess Bruce out of the Empress's good opinion, and if her uncle does not change his sentiments for her she is likely to become her female *confidante*.

Our diplomatic body has lately suffered an entire change. The Imperial, Danish, French, Prussian, and Spanish Ministers are all altered, and one from Naples is added to our corps. This last seems merely a man of letters, unacquainted with and unfit for business. Count Cobenzel, who is to come here from the Court of Vienna,

has excellent parts and great activity ; his nomination, besides its having given umbrage to the King of Prussia by leaving Berlin without a Minister, creates in him a good deal of apprehension, and he has chosen a very able and artful man to counteract his operations in the person of Count Goertz, whom he has many years employed secretly, but never avowedly, till in the late negotiations in Germany. This gentleman arrived on Thursday, and joins to a very good address a pleasing manner and appearance. Cobenzel comes next month. The successor to Count Lacy, from Madrid, is not yet named ; he was a very dangerous Minister for us, as well from his inveterate hatred for the nation to which he originally belonged, as from his having had the art of rendering himself agreeable to many of the leading people. Mons. de Verac is unknown to me ; I understand, however, that he is more amiable in company than formidable in the cabinet, and although he may possibly ingratiate himself with the Empress, yet that he will not be so difficult to deal with as the present Chargé d'Affaires, le Chevalier Corberon, who, though he has a very moderate capacity, has, by being used to the country, got access to all the valets de chambre and inferior agents in the Russian houses, who, being chiefly French, and having, some of them, great weight with their masters, very often conjured up evil spirits where I least of all expected them. The Danish Minister, who has left us, was a worthy man, but neither young nor expensive enough to take here ; though he stood well with the Empress and her Ministers, he was driven from the place by the *persifflage* of the younger part of the nation. I hear he is to be succeeded by Mons. Guilderscroon, now at Stockholm. The Swede and the Saxon, Barons Nolken and Sacken, are most perfectly insignificant ; they

are overpowered with debts, and are neither well received at Court nor in Society. Their political talents are of the meanest kind, and they are as incapable of carrying into execution, as they are of conceiving, any great object. The Dutch Resident, Swart, is a man neither of birth nor character, totally improper for the post he fills; he is married here, and though his wife has given strong marks of preference to others of still lower origin than himself, yet these make still part of his household, and she still governs his house. The Polish Resident, Mr. Deboli, having no other business to transact than to attend to the many law-suits his countrymen have depending here, is selected from that class of men the most proper for this purpose, and neither has, nor pretends to any other merit than that of speaking the Russian exceedingly well, and of being perfectly acquainted with the different avenues of the Senate. Mons. de Simolin,* who will be in England nearly about this time, is well-disposed in his politics; as he thinks himself ill-used by Count Panin, he now adheres to Prince Potemkin, although he was originally a Secretary in the Foreign department, and obtained his first preferment through Count Panin. As he has a considerable share of vanity, he will be much influenced by any marks of distinction or seeming confidence he might receive from your Lordship.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.

Petersburg, 11th, 22nd October, 1779.

My Lord,—Korsack received his dismission from the mouth of the Empress herself yesterday morning; and, a

* Russian Minister in England.

few hours afterwards, General Betzkoy was ordered to assure him of the Empress's intention of providing munificently for him, but that she wished he would either travel or marry. His successor is called Landskoi, of the district of Smolensko; he was one of the Chevalier Gardes, and since Peterhoff, has been the object of Her Imperial Majesty's attention. Potemkin, however, having another person in view, contrived to prevent his nomination till now, when he was induced to consent to it by a present of not less than 900,000 roubles in land and money, on his birthday. Landskoi is young, well made, and, as they say, very tractable. He has a very numerous corps of relations, as well brothers as cousins, most of which will soon make their appearance here. This step has increased Potemkin's power, which nothing can destroy, unless a report, to which I scarce can give credit, is true, and he should himself marry his favourite niece. The agitation such a change ever causes, whilst depending in the Empress's mind, has, for these last two or three days, a good deal affected her health; to-day, I understand, she has quite recovered.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.

Petersburg, 18th, 29th October, 1779.

My Lord,—The pretended interruption we cause in the Neutral trade, seems to be the last resource our ill-wishers here have to employ against us. Hitherto I have warded their blows; and, if we can escape a few weeks longer, the winter will force them to be silent on this subject. I know fresh complaints are preparing at Riga, and that General Browne, Governor of Livonia, has been induced to support them. Count Panin approves the

conduct of the Court of Denmark, and could he have ventured, without a risk of a disavowal from his Sovereign, would have excited them to have written a still stronger paper than that delivered to Mr. Eden, of the 2nd October. The repeated breaches of Neutrality we have experienced from different powers, since the beginning of the present war, and the conduct of the French Admiralty Courts, never find a place in his memory, and he either does not, or will not comprehend, that the demand for the productions of this empire must rise in proportion to their consumption, and that in his endeavours to deprive us of the indisputable right of every nation when at war, he is, in fact, hurting the trade of his own country. I flatter myself, however, that more favourable sentiments, and more acute reasoning, will ultimately direct the measures of this Court.

LETTER FROM HIS MAJESTY GEORGE III. TO THE EMPRESS CATHERINE II.*

A St. James, ce 5e Novbre, 1779.

MADAME MA SŒUR.—J'ai toujours désiré de cultiver l'amitié de votre Majesté Impériale, et de resserrer de plus en plus les nœuds d'une union, qui pose sur la base d'un intérêt réciproque, et d'une estime mutuelle. Tels ont été mes sentimens, et ma conduite pendant tout le cours de mon règne, et c'est toujours avec une satisfaction réelle, que je vois que ceux de votre Majesté y répondent.

Les nouvelles assurances que vous m'en avez donné, Madame, et le vif intérêt que vous prenez à ce qui

* This letter was written at the suggestion of Sir James Harris, through Lord Weymouth, with a view to dispose the Empress favourably towards a Treaty of Alliance, and to impress her with our sincerity in desiring it.

regarde la Grande Bretagne, demandent mes remercîmens, et j'ai un plaisir sincère à vous les faire moi-même. Dans cette occasion comme en tant d'autres, j'ai admiré la grandeur de vos talents, la noblesse de vos sentimens, et l'étendue de vos lumières. L'état actuel de la partie méridionale de l'Europe fournit une nouvelle occasion, où ces grande qualités pourront se déployer avec avantage, et mettre le comble à la gloire de votre règne. Les desseins de mes ennemis, quand même ils chercheroient à les déguiser, n'échapperoient pas à une pénétration comme la votre; mais loin de les cacher ils les montrent avec affectation, et se vantent des projets qu'ils ont formés, et des espérances qu'ils ont conçus. Ces espérances, qui tendent en effet au bouleversement général de l'Europe, pourroient se réaliser, si dans un pareil moment de crise, votre Majesté Impériale restoit spectatrice tranquille. L'emploi, la montre* seul d'une partie de la force navale, pourra restituer et assurer le repos de l'Europe entière, en dissipant la ligue qui s'est formée contre moi, et en maintenant ce système d'équilibre que cette ligue cherche à détruire. Je désire et desirerai toujours la pais; mais toutefois à des conditions compatibles avec le maintien de mes droits, la dignité de ma couronne, les intérêts de mon peuple, et ceux de mes amis et alliés qui en sont inséparables.

Je suis, Madame ma Sœur,

De votre Majesté Impériale,

Le très affectioné Frère,

GEORGE R—

* Montre signifies the review of an army. "En ce sens il est vieux."—Dictionnaire de l'Academie. Here apparently meaning a display of military force.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.

Petersburg, 23rd Oct., 5th Nov., 1779.

I HAVE undoubted intelligence of the Frenchman I before mentioned being authorized to spare no money, either to obtain information or to procure friends to his Court. He has an immense credit in Reimbert's house, and though he does not yet, nor, perhaps, ever will appear in the best company, yet he has already got admission into the several clubs, and into many private houses of this capital. He has been indiscreet enough to boast of having wherewithal to buy Prince Potemkin, and, with that arrogance inseparable from his nation, talks of nothing less than uniting this Court with France. However impossible the completion of such an event would be in hands like his, yet I have reason to think the French ministry do not consider it as totally impracticable. It has certainly been long since agitated at Potzdam, perhaps more fully discussed by this very man in his way through that town. The idea of forming a triple alliance between the Courts of Petersburg, Berlin, and Constantinople, was probably intended merely as a leading step towards the accomplishment of this project, and that if it had been admitted here, France would have found means, sooner or later, to have intruded itself into the connexion. Every day produces me fresh difficulties and new enemies; as long, however, as I hold my ground at Court, I trust their attempts will prove ineffectual.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH.

Petersburg, 29th Oct., 9th Nov., 1779.

MY LORD,—The following fact appears to me sufficiently interesting to find a place in my correspondence with

your Lordship. It was communicated to me by Prince Potemkin, who received it in the official report from the commandant of Kamtschatka. He has obligingly promised me a translation of the report itself, which I shall lose no time in transmitting to your Lordship.

The Commandant writes word that the Russians who go annually to hunt black foxes in the *Insulæ Aleutenses*, were informed by the inhabitants of these islands, that towards the autumn of 1778, or in their own words, *before the leaves were fallen, and while the grass was still green*, there appeared on their coasts two ships, one of three, the other of two masts. That the crews of these ships landed amongst them; they were dressed like Russians, but talked a language they did not understand: that they behaved with the greatest civility, and were received with the greatest hospitality. They gave the inhabitants tobacco and clasped knives, and were offered several things in return, but would accept of nothing but the flesh of a young whale; that after staying a short while they sailed northward, and were seen some time afterwards by the *Tschuktskis* off the *Tschuktskotsoy Nos*, or promontory, at the north-east extremity of Asia. That, however, they did not proceed farther north, but returned by the same track they went, and, after again touching at the *Aleutenses*, steered southward.

On receiving this information, it immediately suggested itself to me, that it might be Captain Cook;* and it is from the probability of this conjecture, that I trouble your Lordship with this intelligence.

* Captain Cook had left England on the 12th of July, 1776: he was on the coast of Kamschatka in the autumn of 1778, and was killed, February 14th, 1779, at Owyhee.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT M. KEITH, VIENNA.

Petersburg, 27th Dec., 7th Jan., 1779—80.

DEAR SIR,—I very much fear our correspondence was broken off on my side; receive, therefore, my apology, and, with the new year, assurances of a more regular conduct for the future.

I think on the whole this Court is *less Prussian* than formerly: some very unheard of-proposals lately come from Potzdam have, though seconded by Count Panin, been rejected by the Empress, and a strange kind of behaviour His Prussian Majesty has lately observed towards his chancellor and some other judges, has rather sunk him in her opinion. Count Goertz also is disconcerted, and evidently has met a reception different from that he expected. We stand high in Her Majesty's predilection, but she thinks it hazardous, singly, to stand forth in our favour. The Bourbons never can directly gain ground here, but they may reap negative advantages from the King of Prussia's influence; in other respects we go on the old way; new favourites, much dissipation of time and money. After this short description, allow me to ask you, whether the reports we hear are true, whether your Court looks very coolly on that of Versailles; whether it is drawing towards ours, and whether lately there have been several confidential transactions between us and them. It is not from simple curiosity that I put these questions; but I think I see a possibility, if the Austrian Minister is in earnest, of, sooner or later, *breaking the ties between this Court and Berlin*, and forming a *triple alliance between the two Empresses and us*, that would be of the highest advantage to each. It is a distant prospect, and I hint it in the utmost confidence; should it take a probable form, I could say a great deal,

and, from having had some very peculiar advantages during my residence here, could point out the most likely means of succeeding. Much will depend on the character, capacity, and political doctrines of Cobenzel, and I wish you would be kind enough to inform me fully on this subject. The King of Prussia has done all he could to hurt him here, but unsuccessfully; I can venture to assert he will be most perfectly well received.

You see, my dear Sir, I am writing more to obtain than to give intelligence. In both points I am actuated by my eager desire of serving our good island in this moment of dilemma, and, as I know your patriotism and prudence, I write without reserve. I am sure I need not say how very essential secrecy is, on this political speculation, which is a child of my own brain, and as yet uncommunicated to any living soul.

[The following is another sop given to the Empress, whose friendship appears to have been considered by our Government nearly *impayable*, and we suspended our right of searching Russian ships.]

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO COUNT PANIN.

Petersburg, ce 31 Dec., ce 11 Jan., 1779—80.

MONSIEUR,—Ma santé ne me permettant pas encore de me rendre chez votre Excellence, je me sers, Monsieur le Comte, de cette voie pour avoir l'honneur de vous apprendre, que par la dernière poste, my Lord Stormont m'a fait part d'un mémoire que Monsieur de Simolin venoit de lui présenter au sujet des inconveniens que le commerce Russe avoit essuyé depuis le commencement de la guerre actuelle, par la conduite de nos armateurs. Dans ce mémoire, le Ministre de Sa Majesté Impériale à Lon-

dres demande au nom de sa Souveraine, qu'on procure satisfaction aux propriétaires des vaisseaux arrêtés, et qu'à l'avenir on donne des orders tant à la Flotte Royale, qu'aux armateurs de la nation Britannique, afin que les sujets Russes puissent dorénavant exercer leur commerce suivant les principes et la lettre des engagemens qui subsistent entre les deux couronnes. My Lord Stormont ne tardera pas de faire une réponse à Mons. de Simolin ; en attendant, je me crois fort heureux de pouvoir, à cette occasion, assurer votre Excellence que le Roi, mon maître, est d'intention de remplir avec la plus grande exactitude les engagemens stipulés dans le Traité de 1765, et qu'il n'a rien de plus à cœur, que de donner des preuves réitérées de ses désirs de cimenter de plus en plus, la bonne harmonie qui subsiste entre les deux Cours. Comme Sa Majesté reconnoit a ne pas en douter, que Sa Majesté Impériale ne permettra jamais à ses sujets d'exercer en temps de guerre un commerce qui pourroit lui porter préjudice, en contribuant à augmenter les forces, soit de mer, soit de terre, de ses ennemis, l'Impératrice peut-être assurée que la navigation de ses sujets ne sera *jamais interrompue ou arrêtée* par les vaisseaux de la Grande Bretagne.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.*

Petersburg, 15th, 26th February, 1780.

My Lord,—The several letters I have written since the reception of your Lordship's despatches, dated the 5th November, 1779, and delivered me on the 3d Decem-

* Lord Stormont succeeded Lord Weymouth as Secretary of State for the Northern Department of Foreign Affairs, in October 1779.

ber following, by my servant Brookes, have, in general terms, so repeatedly declared the turn I foresaw my negotiation was likely to take, as to have fully prepared your Lordship for what you are going to read; and now, when I am about to lay before you a more particular report of what has passed since that period, it would be employing your time to very little purpose, if I was to preface my despatch by a description of my uneasiness, in not having more completely fulfilled the object of my instructions, or by expressing my anxiety lest I should appear in the opinion of my Royal Master, and of his confidential servants, not to have acted in a manner to meet their approbation.

The instructions brought me in your Lordship's letters were so exceedingly clear, and so perfectly consonant to what I had conceived to be the wishes and sentiments of this Court, that it required very little time to arrange them in my mind; I, therefore, the same day that I was honoured with them, waited on Prince Potemkin, and as I had been very assiduous in keeping up my intimacy with him, and had ever found him very eager for the return of my servant, I was happy in thinking myself able to propose, and conclude a plan of alliance and union, so perfectly conformable to what had so often passed between us; and I must do him the justice to say, that on opening myself to him, which I endeavoured to do with an appearance of the most unreserved confidence, he gave the strongest marks of satisfaction.

He made me repeat to him my propositions, and, as in this first conversation I confined them *solely to those of an alliance, and request of immediate assistance,* he said, though he approved entirely the measure himself, yet he feared it would not readily gain admittance with the Empress, as the dread she was under of embarking in

a fresh war, was stronger even than her thirst for glory; and although her predilection for us was perfectly sincere, yet Count Panin and other emissaries,* of less weight in themselves, though equally capable of doing mischief, would take care to keep that under, by malevolent misrepresentations and falsehood, particularly calculated to pique her; and, added he, so susceptible is she of these impressions, that it requires the most dexterous management to efface them. He concluded by desiring me to lose no time in acting on Mons. de Panin (with whom it was of the highest consequence to keep up appearances), and told me it was necessary I should communicate as much of my plan to him as would carry with it an air of thorough confidence, leaving him no room to suppose I kept back anything from him.

Count Panin, beginning to feel the first symptoms of an illness, which was nearly proving fatal to him, he could not see me till some days after this conversation. As usual, he was very profuse of his assurances of regard, and begged me to explain myself more fully. As the paper A.† contains exactly what I said, it is needless to repeat it to your Lordship. Count Panin being confined to his house, had no opportunity of seeing the Empress, he therefore requested of me to write down what I had said, which I the more willingly complied with, as it was a sure way of its getting to the Empress *without mutilation.*

* Count Goertz, &c.

† In this paper, dated Nov. 26th, Sir James Harris, after proving that English and Russian interests are identical, urges Count Panin to put an end to the war by an armed intervention, to be followed by "une alliance entre les deux Cours sans restriction aucune." Sir J. Harris, at the same time, declares, "Notre premier objet c'est la paix. Nous la prefererons *a des termes convenables*, a la guerre la plus glorieuse; en même tems je puis dire, que nous epuiserons jusqu'a nos dernières ressources plutôt que de l'accepter a des conditions déshonorantes."

From pretty regular and exact information, which I am so fortunate as to receive, of what passes in his office, I discovered, however, that he had been uncommonly active on this occasion; that he had, the next day, not only sent my letter to the Empress, but joined to it an answer, to which he entreated Her Imperial Majesty to subscribe. This answer was so adverse to the great object of my instructions, and negatived so fully everything I had required, that I did not lose a moment in returning to Prince Potemkin, to whom, as he always receives me without ceremony, I found easy admittance. He anticipated the motive of my visit, by saying, he had seen the strange proof, as he termed it, of Mons. de Panin's political creed, and weakness of mind; and that though he himself most thoroughly condemned it, yet that it still lay on the Empress's table, and he was doubtful whether she at length would not be induced to acknowledge these sentiments for her own. I asked him with great eagerness, and no small anxiety, what could have operated so singular a revolution; he replied, "You have chosen an unlucky moment. The new favourite lies dangerously ill; the cause of his illness and uncertainty of his recovery have so entirely unhinged the Empress, that she is incapable of employing her thoughts on any subject, and all ideas of ambition, of glory, of dignity, are absorbed in this one passion. Enervated to a degree, she repugns everything which bears the features of activity or exertion. Your antagonists well know how to make use of this opportunity, and Count Panin, who has numberless emissaries at Court, times his counsels with more address than falls to his share in other concerns. My influence," added he, "is suspended, particularly as I have taken on me to advise her to get rid of a favourite who, if he dies in her palace, would do her reputation an essential injury."

I took the liberty of telling him, that by suffering these timid and prejudiced resolutions to prevail, he sunk himself in the eyes of Europe, and contributed to justify the report Count Panin endeavoured to authenticate, that none but himself had any weight with the Empress in matters of importance, and that all others who approached her, enjoyed only the exterior marks of favour, without power or interest. I urged him, therefore, by the value he set on his own reputation, by that noble ambition which I flattered myself had taken possession of his breast, not to remain passive in this moment of trial.

The Prince caught fire at what I said, and assured me, in the strongest manner, that before he slept he would have a trial of skill, whether there was in the empire any influence more powerful than his. Many days, however, passed before I saw him again. Count Panin fell dangerously ill, and the disorder of Landskoi increased; I myself, also, began to feel the first symptoms of a jaundice, and under all these unfavourable circumstances I had one of my most interesting conversations on the 13th of December.

Prince Potemkin had more than once attempted to interrupt me, when I begged leave to be heard out, and when I had ended, he said, "You should say this to Count Panin, not to me; you speak exactly my sentiments, and although I had them not so ready in my mind as you, yet I have made use of most of them to the Empress. She has ordered me to tell you to give in a paper expressive of your notions and instructions, and I trust we shall, at least, mollify the answer which has been prepared for her." I gave him in, the next day, the paper marked B,* and myself fell so ill the following one

* This is a very elaborate and able paper, recapitulating the many instances of jealousy shown by France, ever since the reign of Louis XIV,

as to be obliged to keep my house for three weeks. Nothing, however, was lost, as, had I been in perfect health, I could not have advanced a single step. Your Lordship is not unacquainted with the reasons; and I had no other way of filling up this space usefully, than by keeping Prince Potemkin regularly informed of all news I received from England, which I did at the Empress's request, and by writing him short notes to keep up his good disposition, which I all along have believed, and still do believe, to be perfectly sincere.

Immediately, after my recovery (9th of January), I went by appointment to Count Panin, who was still confined to his bed-chamber, and whose health appeared greatly impaired. After a few common-place compliments on the favourable turn our affairs had taken, he told me he had been for some time in possession of Her Imperial Majesty's answer to the letter I had written him the 26th of November. He did not, as usual, usher in the refusal this answer contained by a long prefatory discourse on the various reasons which induced Her Imperial Majesty to observe such a conduct; neither did he, as he was accustomed, dwell on his own high esteem and cordial affection for the English nation; he contented himself with saying, that what he was going to read to me were the Empress's own words, unaltered by him, and which, for the greater accuracy, he desired I would take down in writing, and your Lordship will find them amongst the inclosed, marked C.*

I took the earliest opportunity of seeing Prince Potem-

towards the growing power of Russia; and contrasting these, and especially the hostile conduct of the Court of Versailles during the last Turkish war, with the friendly measures of England at that period. It is written with an intimate knowledge of history, and of the Empress's personal character.

* This paper is inserted after this despatch.

kin, which, from his being indisposed, I was forced to put off till the 18th January; he then received me in his bed. He read several times the paper which had been dictated to me by Count Panin, and on returning it to me said, "Such will ever be the language of this indolent and torpid Minister; cold professions of friendship, false logic, and narrow views. I can assure you," added he, "the Empress's feelings are very ill expressed, and I recognise in this abstract nothing which she would own but the last paragraph. It is true, from a timidity contrary to her general character, and arising from the impulse of the day, she refuses your proposals; but she never meant to do it in a cold and reserved style."

I replied to him, that whatever might be my private opinion, yet, in my ministerial representations, it was impossible for me to transmit anything which came from Count Panin otherwise than as the authentic resolution of his Court. That from his office he was the person with whom I was obliged to confer, and, in my public capacity, I must abide by all he said; that, therefore, it gave me uncommon concern to be under the necessity of returning to the most *cordial* and *confidential* offers which ever were made, an answer so ill suited to the present wishes of my Court, and which gave them so little expectation of connexion on a future day. That I begged him to turn his thoughts towards this future day, and to reflect whether, considering the fluctuating state of human events, it might not happen that the situation of the two nations might be reversed, and that Russia might stand in a position to solicit the friendship and good offices of England, with as much reason as England did at this moment those of Russia, &c., &c.

That I was convinced myself, that if for these last ten years every motion for uniting them had been rejected,

it was because they never yet had come to a right understanding. That our fair and candid offers had ever been distorted before they got admission to the Empress, &c., &c.

Prince Potemkin answered, the King of Prussia's interest is declining here; the Empress is tired with his importunities, disgusted with his flattery, and particularly displeased to see that he is paying such attention to the Grand-Duke; but the impressions of an influence of so long standing are not easily effaced. You must have patience; depend on it, the chapter of accidents will serve you better than all your rhetoric. Improve events as they arise, and be fully convinced, that if you ever can furnish her with a specious aud plausible pretext, Her Imperial Majesty will embrace your cause with the greatest eagerness. I told him, that the present moment afforded not only the most plausible and specious pretext, but even, in a manner, called on Her Imperial Majesty to take an active part in our concerns: it was evident the decision of the interests of Europe, the termination of the war, would depend on the intervention of the Empress. That by refusing it, she not only would deprive herself of the greatest glory, but she became, in a manner, responsible for the disorder which the continuation of the war might produce in the general system, since every thinking and impartial mind must allow, that an immediate cessation, not a prolongation of hostilities, must necessarily follow so powerful an interposition, &c., &c.

So far from being displeased with the freedom with which I spoke, Prince Potemkin strongly relished it, and desired me to give it in to him immediately in writing, since he was sure it would operate favourably, and kindle still stronger those sparks of ambition and regard for us which

now again began to show themselves. I the next day, therefore, delivered him the paper D;* and as, fortunately, the singular conduct of His Catholic Majesty† came at this moment to my knowledge, I inserted it as a proof of what was to be expected from the House of Bourbon if they acquired that maritime superiority they were contending for. On reading this paragraph, Prince Potemkin said, "*Par Dieu vous la tenez*, the Empress abhors the inquisition, and never will suffer its precepts to be exercised on the seas. If what you advance is confirmed by our letters from Spain, you may depend on it we shall be no longer inactive." The next post brought the confirmation, and a few days after, a very strong memorial,‡ marked E, was drawn up under the Empress's own inspection, and the last article added by her own order. This memorial was both sent to Madrid and given to the Spanish Chargé des Affaires here, who despatched a courier with it the 30th of January.

By the post of the 6th February there arrived letters

* In this paper Sir J. Harris argues that France, having been during the last year unsuccessful against us in America, would, probably, be disposed to listen to the Empress's recommendations of peace, and be glad to terminate the war in an honourable manner. He afterwards attempts to show, that if America and France should finally prevail against us, the former would hereafter supply the latter with hemp, pitch, timber, &c., to the detriment of the Russian trade.

† An order was given by the Court of Madrid to bring all Neutral ships destined for the Mediterranean into the port of Cadiz, and to sell their lading to the highest bidder, not only without the consent and participation of the proprietors, but even of their respective Consuls.—*Harris Papers.*

‡ The memorial concludes thus:

"Il a été formé partout des plaintes contre la Grande Bretagne, et la Cour de Madrid et de Versailles en ont fait souvent que cette Puissance troubloit la liberté du commerce. Cependant la Cour de Londres a pris fortement à cœur de contenter les négociants neutres, dont les charges ont été saisies conformément à leur propre factures, et en ajoutant même un profit raisonnable. Si cette manière d'agir s'est attirée de justes reproches, combien plus étrange ne doivent pas paroître aux yeux de toutes les nations les principes actuellement adoptés en Espagne."—*Harris Papers.*

from the Russian Consul at Cadiz, that a Russian vessel, with a Russian flag, bound with corn to Malaga, had been brought in, confiscated, the cargo disposed of to the best bidder, and the crew very inhumanly treated. It was no unfortunate circumstance for me to learn, that this same ship had been visited by our cruizers, but treated in the most civil manner, and dismissed, as having an innocent cargo. I was going to expatiate on this to Prince Potemkin when he sent for me, (Tuesday last, 11th February,) and with an impetuous joy, analogous to his character, he said, "I heartily congratulate you; orders will be given to arm instantly fifteen ships of the line, and five frigates; they are to put to sea early in the spring, and though they will be supposed to protect the Russian trade, *envers et contre tous*, they are meant to chastise the Spaniards, whose insolence and arbitrary conduct the Empress cannot put up with." I told him I was highly sensible for this early and confidential communication, but though I admired the spirit and activity which animated this measure, I did not see how it directly benefitted us. He replied, "It is entirely owing to what you have advanced. Count Panin would have kept the whole from her. Improve the enthusiasm of the moment, an act of vigour of this kind is better than the strongest declaration; it is beyond the reach of your enemies; and, flowing spontaneously from the Empress, they dare not oppose it. Your nation may consider themselves as having twenty ships added to their fleet; for though, perhaps, we shall not co-operate with you, we certainly shall direct the attention of as many of those of your enemy."

I still told him I was not so sanguine. In short, that it was no more than the completion of that system of giving protection to their trade, suggested last year by the three Northern Courts, now carried into execution.

Prince Potemkin, almost out of humour with my objections, and with my backwardness to admit the great advantage we should derive from this step, said, "I am just come from the Empress; it is by her particular orders I tell it to you; she commanded me to lose no time in finding you out; she said she knew it would give you pleasure, and, besides myself, you are at this moment the only person acquainted with her design." He ended by desiring me to despatch my messenger immediately, expressing his impatience for this event being known in London. I begged him to assure Her Imperial Majesty how grateful I was for this additional mark of her goodness; that I would repeat it exactly in his own words, and would convey, as accurately as lay in the power of my pen, the satisfaction he expressed on the occasion; that I was still free to confess to him, that this circumstance gave me more pleasure than the armament itself, since there could be no doubt, that while we had so powerful and able a friend near the Empress's person, we might hope for everything.

INCLOSURE C. OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT, DATED

Petersburg, 15th, 26th February, 1780.

La sincérité des sentimens d'amitié de l'Impératrice pour le Roi et la nation de la Grande Bretagne, porte Sa Majeste Imperiale à recevoir avec sensibilité toutes les ouvertures confidentielles qu'il plait à Sa Majesté Britannique de lui faire sur la situation présente de la guerre. Mais en même temps, elle se sent fort peinée de ne point pouvoir concilier sa façon de penser et ses désirs sur l'accélération de la paix; avec les ouvertures et les propositions que nous fait la Cour de Londres. L'Impératrice

aime la paix; elle désire ardemment que la Grand Bretagne en jouisse au plutot ; cependant Sa Majesté Impériale se tient convaincue que les démarches que la Cour de Londres lui propose pour l'accélérer, produiront, à coup sûr, *un effet tout à fait contraire*, vu, qu'une proposition de paix, ou une médiation offerte, sans aucune condition conciliante, mais appuyée, au contraire, de démonstrations, doivent nécessairement produire un effet directement opposé au sentiment de l'Impératrice pour le Roi, et sa nation, et ne sauroit manquer de provoquer les ennemis de la Grande Bretagne à une extention indéterminée de la guerre, en y enveloppant tout le Continent de l'Europe.

Relativement au Traité d'Alliance proposé, l'Impératrice ne balance point de se tenir persuadée qu'on ne sauroit cacher à l'équité du Roi, que le temps de la conclusion d'une Alliance défensive n'est pas de sa nature, de l'état d'une guerre effective, et surtout de la guerre présente, dont la cause a été de tout temps exclue des Alliances entre la Russie et l'Angleterre, comme n'appartenant point à leurs possessions respectives en Europe.

Au reste, Sa Majesté Impériale assure le Roi, de la manière la plus forte, qu'elle persistera toujours dans ses sentimens pour lui, et pour la nation Britannique, et si la Cour de Londres pourra trouver quelques termes pour apprécier la base d'une réconciliation entre les puissances belligérantes, afin de prévenir une plus grande effusion de sang, et qu'elle jugera la participation de l'Impératrice utile aux intérêts de la Grande Bretagne, Sa Majesté Impériale se prêtera avec le plus grand empressement à s'y employer, avec le zèle et l'intégrité d'une amie et alliée naturelle de la Grande Bretagne.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 15th, 26th February, 1780.

My Lord,—A few days ago I supped with the Empress in a very small society at Count Stroganoff's, where no other foreigner, nor indeed any one but those she treats with the greatest familiarity, were present. During the time of supper she took me aside, and after telling me how highly flattered she was with the cordial terms in which His Majesty's letter was conceived, she told me that I had been the cause lately of her passing many a restless hour. "*Vous m'avez donné des insomnies;* the several papers you have given in to Prince Potemkin, joined to the interest I take in everything that concerns your country, have made me revolve in my mind every kind of means by which I could assist you. I would do everything to serve you, *except involving myself in the war;* I should be answerable to my subjects, my successor, and perhaps to all Europe, for the consequence of such a conduct." I would have persuaded her, that none of the consequences she dreaded could possibly arise from her conforming to the proposals I had made, but she stopped me by saying, "Je sais déjà tout ce que vous pouvez me dire; cela à déjà fait assez d'impression sur moi, *si j'étois plus jeune, je serois peut-être moins sage.* My utmost wishes, my most ardent vows, are for peace; and you may assure the King, your master, if he can make any use of me towards the obtaining so desirable an object, he may depend that I will act with as much impartiality as my predilection for the nation he governs will admit of. I shall write, added she, in this style to His Majesty myself, and you shall have my answer in a very few days." I would willingly have continued the conversation on this

subject, but the Empress gave it another turn, and though it lasted full an hour longer, nothing material passed, except her saying afterwards, (though that was not addressed to me,) "Qu'elle donneroit de l'argent aux pauvres de Petersbourg, si Mons. Rodney venoit à battre la Flotte Espagnole;" and indeed the eagerness with which she expects news from England, and the satisfaction she shows when it is favourable for us, leave me no room to doubt she would keep her word.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 21st Feb., 3rd March, 1780.

My Lord,—The Empress, on coming into the room yesterday evening, immediately said to me, in a whisper, "I am better than my word; for, besides 1,000 roubles which I will bestow on the poor of Petersburg, I give you this ball and entertainment on account of Rodney's successes.* Under this roof," said she, referring to the rules of the Hermitage, "frankness and sincerity should ever dwell; I cannot, therefore, conceal from you my satisfaction on this occasion, though I express it to you not as Empress of Russia to the English Minister, neither must it make part of your ministerial despatches, but merely as a friend of England speaking to a good Englishman." She honoured me afterwards with her conversation almost the whole of the evening; and, when my colleagues and the

* Rodney, on his way to the West Indies, was ordered to relieve Gibraltar, then closely besieged by the Spaniards. He met and engaged the enemy's fleet off Cape St. Vincent; took or destroyed six out of eleven ships of the line, and made prisoner Langara, the Spanish Admiral, who, though inferior in force, fought with great gallantry.

rest of the Company went to sup with the Grand Duke and Duchess, permitted me to partake of her own very frugal repast, which was served on a card-table, without attendants or spectators of any kind. If these distinctions and marks of good-will, both in the Sovereign and her principal favourite, cover any insidious and false design, the intrigue is too artfully concerted for me to unravel it; and if, in my descriptions of the sentiments of this Court, I deceive your Lordship, it is because I myself am most egregiously deceived.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS, K.B., TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 25th Feb., 7th March, 1780.

My Lord,—I now find that the letters to the several Russian Ministers at foreign Courts, to instruct them to promote a *General League for the protection of Neutral trade*, were sent by the post in the course of last week, and that the formal declaration which is to go by couriers, was given in to the Empress yesterday for her approbation. It is addressed to all the Neutral maritime powers, and, in its present state, sets forth the various inconveniences which their respective trade has suffered since the beginning of hostilities between England and France and Spain; draws nearly the same comparison between our conduct and that of the Court of Madrid, as expressed in the note delivered to Mr. Normandez; and concludes by saying, that the Empress of Russia, not having received sufficient satisfaction on these points, is determined to employ more efficacious means to obtain it, and invites the different Courts to join with her in a measure so necessary for their mutual honour, and the security of their commerce.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO MORTON EDEN, ESQ. COPENHAGEN.

Petersburg, 25th Feb., 7th March, 1780.

DEAR SIR,—It would be employing your time to very little purpose to carry you through the mazes of a long and intricate negotiation which has lasted three months; neither is it necessary, for your information, to know more than that with the strongest, and, I really believe, sincere professions of friendship and regard, Russia does not, at this moment, accept our alliance, but with eagerness offers her good offices towards a general pacification. I am, however, far from desponding; and, as I see the warmest predilection in the Empress herself, and, I trust, a gradual decline in the interest and weight of our opponents, I rely greatly on the chapter of accidents, which begin to turn up in our favour.

The King of Prussia has overshot the mark, and, as is often the case, by being too cunning, betrayed himself. The Court of Vienna makes strong advances here, and I believe you may depend upon an interview taking place between the Empress and Emperor in the summer, on the confines of Poland. On the other side, the arbitrary and ill-judged conduct of the King of Spain towards Neutral vessels has raised the Empress's indignation to such a degree, that she has ordered fifteen ships of the line and five frigates to be ready for sea by May, and means to invite all the Neutral nations to join with her in opposition to this irregular conduct. A courier was despatched to Stockholm and Copenhagen a few days ago; another is going to Madrid and Lisbon; and a third to France, England, and Holland. I shall be eager to know the conduct of Sacken, as the whole is the Empress's own act and deed, without the advice or even approbation of Count Panin,

to whom he is entirely devoted. It is considered here as a strong measure in our favour, and occasions reports which I wish were true; these are confirmed by the very uncommon distinctions I continue to receive, which, however I know better how to rate than lookers-on. I take no other merit on myself than having defeated the attacks of our adversaries, driving them from the footing they had obtained, and rekindled in Her Imperial Majesty's breast a cordial glow in our favour, which perhaps inattention and awkwardness on our side, joined to ill-will and malice here, had in a manner obliterated.

If Spain, under these circumstances, should give a haughty answer, and we, as I have strongly urged, *pay particular attention* to those few ships carrying the Russian flag, it is certain the present armament may end in a junction with ours; but this is more to be wished than expected.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 6th, 17th March, 1780.

My Lord,—In a conversation I had the pleasure of holding the day before yesterday with Count Panin, his Excellency read to me a declaration your Lordship will already have received from Mons. de Simolin, to whom I understand it was sent by a courier on Saturday last. It is explicit of the motives of the naval armament* which lately has caused much speculation in this capital. The Russian Minister told me, that as opportunities offered, he had acquainted the several foreign Ministers with this

* For the protection of the Russian trade.

resolution, and added, very obligingly, that if he had seen me sooner, he should not have delayed so long communicating it to me. I replied, that I was highly sensible of his kind intentions, and very grateful for every mark of his confidence; and that if, on the present occasion, I had been perhaps the last to put myself in his way, it was because I should have expressed very ill the reliance my Court and nation had on Her Imperial Majesty's friendship and good-will, if I had been eager to show, even a curiosity, much less an uneasiness, to be informed of the cause of the warlike preparations making here. The interests of the two Courts were invariable; &c.

Count Panin was a good deal embarrassed in this conversation; he repeatedly assured me the whole was the Empress's own act and deed, and concealed from me entirely, the invitation for the other Neutral states to accede to a general plan of commercial protection. I felt he was hurt by being forced to tell me what he knew I was as well informed of as himself; and though I endeavoured to suit myself to everything he could wish or expect, he was embarrassed through the whole conference, which lasted about half an hour. I impute this to the last letters received from Potzdam, in which I am assured, beyond a doubt, His Prussian Majesty does me the honour to mention me more than once, and cautions both his own Minister and Count Panin to be on their guard with me. He goes so far as to say that I am acting entirely from my own head, and that I very soon shall have a flat disavowal from my Court. It is some satisfaction to come under the observation of so great a man in any shape, and I am by no means ashamed to be noticed by him in this manner.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 10th, 21st March, 1780.

My Lord,—I had been informed that, in the course of the last week, both the Chargé des Affaires of the Bourbon Courts had been with Prince Potemkin. The Spaniard was merely the echo of the Frenchman, and he probably, had got his information from the Prussian Minister, who again had received them from Count Panin. The Chevalier de Corberon expostulated with the Prince on the apparent intimacy subsisting between him and me, and that my frequent visits looked hostile to France; that he knew the lengths I went to stir up the Empress, but that he trusted both Her Imperial Majesty and those who advised her were too wise not to see the fatal consequences which might result from her granting us effectual assistance. To give more weight to what he said, he took from his pocket a paper, from which he read *a list of the several times I had been with Prince Potemkin*, and also of what he supposed had passed. Prince Potemkin, who had been displeased with every part of the conversation, now grew impatient, and without giving any answer whatsoever, broke it off abruptly by saying, he was busy. Corberon left the paper on the table, and went away; he likewise left the French answer to our *exposé*.

As I was perfectly sure that my intelligence on what passed in the conference was exact, I went the next day to the Prince, and, on his receiving me with his usual cheerfulness and friendship, I told him, laughing, that I was afraid I should have found his doors shut against me; that the French Chargé des Affaires (and it was in part true) had, in talking to his intimates given out, that he had intimidated him; that he had made him

see how dangerous it was to risk the displeasure of France, and that he had put an effectual stop to my proceedings. Prince Potemkin said, "I believe, indeed, he would have intimidated me, but if he thought he really did it, he probably mistook indignation and contempt for fear." He then related to me what had passed, and assured me that he had returned Corberon's paper unread.

He informed me confidentially that the French had failed in several underhand attempts to get at the Empress, particularly one through Count Stroganoff; he said, also, that the King of Prussia no longer ruled in her councils; that she was disgusted with Count Panin, and repeated to me that we were the only nation towards whom she was partial. He added, "I am so convinced of this, that, if it was not my opinion, it would be my interest to support you, as a contrary conduct would deprive me of the Empress's favour."

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 13th, 24th March, 1780.

My Lord,—The Empress in talking a few days ago to a person on whom I can depend, and who is strongly and sincerely interested in our welfare, expressed her wishes that we would, at this moment, renew our propositions of reconciliation to the Americans; and on my friend's asking her whether he might mention what she said to me, she replied in the affirmative. "Tell him," said she, "not from me ministerially, but as from a hearty well-wisher to his country, that I have the strongest grounds for advancing what I say, and that I desire he would write to his Court, as a private and confidential communi-

cation from me." I have endeavoured in vain, my Lord, to discover on what she founds this sentiment; Prince Potemkin cannot account for it from the intelligence received from abroad; neither does there appear anything in what the French courier brought which could lead the Empress to such a conjecture. It is, however, my duty to transmit it to your Lordship as it came to me; it is, at least, proof that our concerns employ Her Imperial Majesty's thoughts, and I trust your Lordship will furnish me with an answer calculated to the character and sentiments of Her Imperial Majesty.*

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 17th, 28th March, 1780.

My Lord,—My satisfaction would be complete if I could venture to hope I could induce the Empress to stand forth in the manner your Lordship suggests, and that my endeavours to work her up to a measure so becoming her dignity, would at last, prove successful. I am, indeed, satisfied, from the repeated and undoubted proofs of partiality she expresses for the British nation, that I should overcome every obstacle, if my opponents acted with common candour, or confined themselves within the bounds of decency and truth. This, however, is far from being the case; and, besides the misrepresenta-

* When Mr. Harris wrote this despatch he did not then know what he since discovered, that the Chevalier de Corberon had shown Count Panin, under promise of the strictest secrecy, a secret article of the treaty of alliance between France and Spain, which stipulated that France never would consent to peace till the independence of the Colonies was established, either *de jure* or *de facto*.—*Harris Papers.*

tion of facts, and every trick the lowest political cunning can supply, I have to combat with personal attacks, and am thought of sufficient importance for the King of Prussia to have written to Count Goertz, *de tout tenter pour écraser un Ministre ingrat, qu'il avoit comblé de ses bontés à Berlin.* I know these to be the words of a letter recently received, and though they certainly add fresh difficulties to my situation, yet I cannot but feel a secret satisfaction in being the object of jealousy of such a Prince, and am free to confess to your Lordship, that they add an additional spur to my zeal and eagerness to fulfil my duty.

The five points of the armed neutrality being often alluded to in this Correspondence, they are here inserted.

1. Que les vaisseaux neutres puissent naviguer librement de port en port, et sur les côtes des nations en guerre.

2. Que les effets appartenant aux sujets des dites puissances en guerre soient libres sur les vaisseaux neutres à l'exception des marchandises de contrebande.

3. Que l'Impératrice se tient quant à la fixation de celles ci, a ce qui est énoncé dans les articles 10 et 11 de son traité de commerce avec la Grande Bretagne, en étendant ces obligations à toutes les puissances en guerre.

4. Que pour déterminer ce qui caractérise un port bloqué, on n'accorde cette denomination qu'à celui, où il y a, par la disposition de la puissance qui l'attaque avec des vaisseaux arrêtés et suffisamment proches un danger evident d'entrer.

5. Que ces principes servent de règle dans les procédures et les jugements sur la légalité des prises.

DESPATCH FROM LORD STORMONT TO SIR J. HARRIS.

St. James's, 11th April, 1780.

SIR,—Your excellent despatches by Russel have been considered with the attention they deserve, and as I have had already the pleasure to inform you, your whole conduct meets with His Majesty's entire approbation. In the present situation of things, the important negotiation you are charged with must, I doubt, stand still, as I see no steps that can be taken with propriety to advance its progress. It is not for the King's dignity to *solicit* any alliance, how respectable, how desirable soever; besides, too great eagerness on one side tends only to raise a suspicion, that the engagements proposed have not that fair and perfect equality which ought to be the basis of all mutual agreements, and is, indeed, the only foundation on which they can stand secure.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 31st March, 11th April, 1780.

MY LORD,—If, on further inquiry, I should find, as I almost suspect, that my friend's* fidelity has been shaken, or his political faith corrupted, in the late conferences by any direct offers or indirect promises of reward, I shall think myself, in such a case, not only authorized but obliged to lure him with a similar bait, since, if he ever should be brought to act under Prussian influence, and it should come from that quarter, every hope of success here will be cut off, and the tide will turn powerfully against us. I shall, however, take care

* Prince Potemkin.

to use only general terms, and by creating expectations, keep up the good-will till I hear from your Lordship. You will be pleased to recollect that I have to do with a person immensely rich, who well knows the importance of what is asked, and whose avidity, not necessity, is to be paid. He will require, perhaps, as much as Torcy* proposed, but without success, to Marlborough.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 31st March, 11th April, 1780.

THE following intelligence comes to me from so secret a channel, that I must entreat your Lordship to make a confidential use of it. Count Goertz received, a few days ago, a messenger from Potzdam, and has since had almost daily conferences with Count Panin and Prince Potemkin. The Emperor's interview at Mohilow gives the King of Prussia such uneasiness, that he has determined to send the Prince of Prussia here in September next, and the chief object of these conferences was to propose this visit. The Empress kept him three days without an answer, and I know was neither flattered nor pleased with the proposition; it was, however, accepted on Sunday, with every appearance of cordiality and friendship, and Count Goertz plumes himself on having carried a material point. He was, besides, instructed to paint the Court of Vienna in the blackest colours; to recall to the Empress's mind the conduct it observed in the late Turkish war,† its late

* Two millions of francs were offered by Mons. de Torcy, Minister of Louis XIV. at the Hague, May 1709, to the Duke of Marlborough, to bring him to the French interests.—*Mem de Torcy*, tom. ii. p. 99.

† The Emperor's efforts to obtain favourable terms for the Turks.

views on Bavaria,* and its still more recent conduct at Ratisbonne, where, by having brought over the Kings of Great Britain and Denmark, it had obtained a superiority which might produce the most fatal consequences; to endeavour to exasperate her, by insinuating that the Empress Queen was very adverse to her son's journey, and would not submit to it till she was assured the Emperor's morals would not be in danger, and that his capacity and experience were sufficient to overreach the dissipated train which would attend her. Count Goertz was then to enter on a wider field; to descant on the moderation and pacific disposition of his master, &c.

He was to conclude this kind of political sermon by several false articles of intelligence, forged for the purpose, and which, though he cannot venture to hope they will be admitted as fact, he well knows tend to refresh those sentiments it is so much his interest to keep up here. Count Goertz executed his commission with zeal, but I have reason to believe has hitherto made little impression on the Empress. I wish I could say I was not apprehensive of his having staggered Prince Potemkin's faith, either from his arguments, or, what is more likely, by holding out to him some great personal advantage he may receive from serving his master. Count Panin opposed violently his going to Prince Potemkin, and on Count Goertz insisting on the necessity of obeying his instructions, his Excellency flew into an outrageous passion, and threatened to abandon the Prussian interests. This lasted, however, a very short while, and they now appear perfectly reconciled.

As soon as I was in possession of what had passed, I lost no time in returning to Prince Potemkin, to coun-

* He claimed two thirds of Bavaria in right of Suzeraineté, as King of Bohemia, over the fiefs of Bavaria.

teract, if possible, the effect of a conversation with which, however, I was supposed to be entirely unacquainted. Potemkin was as warm as ever in his expressions; he treated my apprehensions as groundless, assured me the Empress's sentiments for us were immoveable, and that she never would appear amongst the active powers of Europe, but as our friend. I here reminded him of the conduct of Prince Galitzin* at the Hague, and of the note I had given him a few days ago; he said he had not yet had a proper opportunity of showing it to the Empress, but that certainly he would not forget it. I urged to him the necessity of a disavowal of such an unfriendly behaviour; of the disgrace it was to Russia to suffer her Minister to be led by a French Ambassador or, what was still worse, to receive instructions from any other Sovereign but his own.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 7th, 18th April, 1780.

My Lord,—I am now to acknowledge your Lordship's letter of the 23rd of March, which I do with uncommon pleasure, as it not only has relieved my mind from the weight of anxiety it laboured under, lest my conduct should be disapproved, but because I began to fear Russel had met with some foul play on the road. At the same time that I express my most grateful thanks for this gracious approbation, allow me to intreat a continuation of the same indulgence from whence it arises. My situation grows every day more difficult; my opponents and

* Russian Minister at the Hague, and a partisan of the French. He had been urging the Dutch to act against England, which a prospect of trading with America invited them to do.

their means of opposition increase; and, what is worse, I fear my friends slacken; under these circumstances, I feel myself reduced to almost desperate remedies.

No public events have occurred since my last.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 7th, 18th April, 1780.

My Lord,—After taking infinite pains, I have discovered, that at the same time when Count Goertz proposed the Prince of Prussia's visit, he delivered, in the most secret manner, a letter from the King to Prince Potemkin. It was conceived in terms of the vilest adulation and most fulsome flattery; and after asserting, as from the most undoubted authority, that the sole object of the interview at Mohilow was to overset the union subsisting between the Courts of Berlin and Petersburg, and to create a new system of politics, His Prussian Majesty intreats Prince Potemkin to support and maintain his interests on this occasion; and that if he will assist him with his influence, *il tâchera de rendre possible, ce qui paroît impossible;* words, though vague, are yet very expressive, and which, I fear, have sunk very deep in Prince Potemkin's mind, since they either refer to the putting him in possession of Courland,* or what, for many reasons, I think more probable, imply a promise to reconcile him so far with the Grand-Duke, as to insure him, in case of the Empress's demise, safety for his person, honours, and property; the danger of being deprived of which frequently haunts him, and there are moments when he is plunged in the profoundest melancholy. I

* The Duchy of Courland was held out by Frederick as a bribe to Potemkin.—*Harris Papers.*

have not been long enough in possession of this secret to follow it with all the probable conjectures which belong to it; it accounts, however, for what I have too clearly perceived for these last ten days, and merits my most serious attention, to prevent, if possible, the contagion infecting the Empress.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 17th, 28th April, 1780.

My Lord,—The Empress was seized, a few days ago, with a violent sore throat and fever, which has obliged her to keep her bed for four-and-twenty hours. Her physician was very uneasy, but she now is recovering apace, though still confined.

An answer is received from Madrid to the first complaints sent from hence; it was delivered verbally to Mons. Zenovieff. After strong expressions of regard for the Empress, it promises that the Russian vessels shall be restored, and new regulations made on the subject of neutral ships. The Empress has not yet seen this answer, being too much indisposed to attend to business; but it gives great satisfaction to many here, and is a cordial to the Bourbon agents. Mons. Zenovieff adds, that His Catholic Majesty has quarrelled with his Confessor, and that the Spanish nation in general declaims loudly against the war.

The Dutch resident gives himself uncommon pains, and, from being deservedly one of the most despised and unnoticed of my colleagues, he now is held up by his friends as a man of parts and activity. I flatter myself, however, all his efforts will end in noise and clamour,

* Russian Ambassador at Madrid.

and that we shall soon see him sunk into his former obscurity.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 24th April, 5th May, 1780.

My Lord,—It is now in my power to give your Lordship a more accurate account of the explanation required by the King of Sweden to the late *Declaration*,* and of the answers of this Court; it was on five points.†

Count Panin, as I before said, gave an immediate general verbal answer; but Baron Nolken asking for a written one, he declined giving it till he had consulted the Empress, and, as his Excellency says, in consequence of her commands, replied as follows, observing the order in which the questions were put. First,—The ships of war of each Neutral station shall protect the trade of all the others, providing the vessel requiring protection has its proper documents and be illegally attacked. This first answers the second question; but it is added, to render the protection more efficacious, stations shall be agreed on for the different squadrons to cruize in. Third,—As to the fleets' acting in concert, it must depend on orders. If any of them meet, they are to observe the usual salute. Fourth,—Complaints are to be set forth by the Minister of the Court offended, but strongly seconded by those of all the other leagued states. Fifth,—If any of the confederated Neutral powers begin hostilities, such power is immediately excluded from the league. If either of the belligerent ones (the words are) *commence des hostilités, soit par animosité, pique, ou autres raisons, on concertera des mesures pour se faire respecter.*

* For observing the armed Neutrality. † Vide page 290.

The paper ends with a pompous detail of the integrity and impartiality of the Empress's intentions, of the great effects this measure is likely to produce, and of the admiration it has already caused in Europe.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 24th April, 5th May, 1780.

My Lord,—Your Lordship will perceive, by my despatch of this date, how earnest the Russian Minister is of carrying the Declaration into execution. He encourages, with a factious eagerness, the members of this Neutral Confederation; and, on the French and Dutchmen expressing doubts, declared to them positively, yesterday, that it was the Empress's firm resolution to abide by the strict sense of her Declaration, "*que c'étoit son intention permanante et invariable.*" While he is thus hurrying his Court into a measure the most unfriendly towards us, and most destructive to his own country, and that with every appearance of success, Prince Potemkin, whom I see daily, and who treats me with unusual kindness, assures me that the whole will end in nothing; that the Empress never will be brought to subscribe to a project so detrimental to England, and authorizes me, in her name, to hold that language to your Lordship. I repeat the fact, my Lord, but I by no means venture to vouch to the truth of the assertion; I know, while he is talking thus, the French and Spanish houses are engaging Russian ships to carry home their commissions; that the proprietors of these ships have applied for permission to accept the bargain; and that, though last year, *in consequence of my representation*, they were refused, yet,

that now leave will be granted them. Notwithstanding these sinister appearances, though Count Panin has thrown off the mask, and though I fear Prince Potemkin has put one on, yet I neither despond nor flag. The importance of the object supports my strength, while the justice of our cause keeps up my spirits. I am sure the Empress's meaning has been cruelly distorted: her intentions were, and are friendly; and if I ever can succeed in making her understand the subject, I still shall be able to stifle this political monster in its cradle. I am preparing everything for this purpose, and certainly shall redespatch my messenger before the Empress's departure for Mohilow, on which subject I have not time to write by this post.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 24th April, 5th May, 1780.

My Lord,—The personal attacks on me are carried to a ridiculous length. Letters from Potzdam assert that my whole conduct is disapproved at home; that I act from my own head, without orders; and that I do not possess the confidence of any of my superiors. The Russian minister here too, says, that from my connexion with Prince Potemkin, and by having obtained indirect means of getting at the Empress, I had put false notions into her head, and that he and her other Ministers were obliged to have recourse to the present measures to prevent her embarking her empire into the greatest of all evils; that my behaviour is more like a partizan than a Minister, but that he will make me feel the folly of my conduct, by disgracing me both here and at home. I can, however, assure your Lordship, that I have never

been deficient to Count Panin in any shape whatsoever; that while he is thus stabbing me in the dark, he receives me every day in his house, with the strongest appearances of cordiality and regard; and that, if he examines everything which has passed between us, he will find he has no charge against me but that of not suffering myself to be deceived by him, and of not bringing upon me the just censure of my Royal Master, by placing implicit faith in his maxims and language.

You will do me the justice to believe, my Lord, no private consideration ever shall influence my political conduct, and that while I am conscious of serving with integrity and zeal, I shall feel myself beyond the reach of the ill-will of my opponents.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 15th, 26th May, 1780.

My Lord,—I waited, Friday, 24th April, on his Excellency Count Panin.

I entered on the subject of the Declaration;* as I was not ignorant of the contents of Mons. de Simolin's despatches, I found I had a very delicate part to play, and that I should find it difficult to obtain credit for the assurances I was ordered to make of the King's desire to show a due deference to everything which came from a Sovereign so well disposed as Her Imperial Majesty, without admitting the sense of the Declaration in its whole extent.

It did not seem to me the moment to employ an affected complaisance, or hold a language which would wear the features of duplicity and mystery. The plain

* Of the armed Neutrality.

truth furnished me with such good arguments, that I was happy to stand on such solid ground. I began by reading and delivering to Count Panin the paper your Lordship had sent by the way of answer to the Russian Declaration.*

I begged his Excellency would be kind enough, when he communicated it to the Empress, strongly to enforce what I now said; since I understood rumours had got abroad (certainly propagated for invidious purposes), that we reprobated the whole Declaration in the strongest manner, and had pronounced ministerially, that we never would subscribe to any part of it.

Free expostulation was one of the particular attributes of friendship, and the claiming this as a right, never could displease a Sovereign of the turn of mind and character of the Empress; that if it should, I feared what I was going to read to him would produce effects directly contrary to those I expected from it; that, however, I would venture to put it into his Excellency's hand, not in the least doubting that he would state it in such a manner to Her Imperial Majesty, that it should appear as it was really meant, *comme un raisonnement amical*, bearing the strongest marks of our desire of conforming to everything the Empress proposed, that was not in direct contradiction to our own interest, and an evident advantage to our enemies.

I then read and gave to him the paper B, already referred to in my other despatch.

He assured me he would lay before the Empress what

* A despatch from Lord Stormont, dated April 11th, asserting that the declaration of armed Neutrality is a false interpretation of the law of nations, and insisting that the goods of an enemy, when found on board a Neutral ship, are a legal prize, &c.; in support of which he quotes many authorities.—*Harris Papers.*

I had delivered him, and accompany it with the expressions I had made use of. He repeated to me more than once, in the most solemn matter, that the Declaration was not his work; that it came to him unexpectedly, and without his knowing why it was made; and that, on this occasion, he had officiated merely as the Empress's secretary.

A few days after, on his return from Czarsco Zelo, I again waited on him, to inform myself what effect the paper I had given in had produced. Count Panin told me that he had seen the Empress but for a very short time; that she had taken it with her into her closet, without making any observations on it. He said, however, he thought we had been rather hasty in England, *que nous nous sommes trop échauffés*, and that we did not see the Declaration in its true light, nor understand its real meaning. That for his part, though he could assure me he was not in possession of Her Imperial Majesty's secret on this occasion, he confessed it struck him as a measure which had already rendered us a very essential service in Holland, by preventing the Dutch flinging themselves into the arms of the French; that was, by being influenced by the sentiments of Russia, they would still remain a Neutral state. He wished that we would either be more moderate in our conduct towards the trade of such states, or at least be explicit in what we deemed contraband articles. That it was wisdom to regulate our behaviour according to our situation; that now we stood single, not, as in the preceding wars, either allied or in the same interests with half Europe; that when we were thus circumstanced, the high tone, *le ton de supériorité*, we took at sea was less felt; that for his part, he most sincerely wished us well, but that he could not help remarking that he apprehended our perseverance

in our present ideas would carry us too far, beyond even the great force and resources of our nation.

It is not an easy task to reply with prudence to the Minister of a friendly Court, when he puts on the language and sentiments of an enemy. I wished to avoid in my answer everything which should indicate disgust or suspicion, yet not leave anything unsaid which might serve to refute the opinions he advanced.

I begun by observing, that the effect the Declaration had produced was directly opposite to that his Excellency foretold; for there the strongest reason to suppose the Dutch* would have settled matters with us in a very different manner, if they had not been taught to believe that the Empress of Russia would carry through all their pretensions, however extravagant; that the joy they showed at the arrival of the Declaration clearly proved the sense in which they took it; and the French, far from considering it as taking them out of their hands, were equally overjoyed and surprised to receive from this Court so unexpected and so singular a service. That I never recollected our having taken a *high tone* at sea; that we asserted and defended our right with becoming spirit and dignity; that now, to do otherwise would betray pusillanimity; and that, after all, I did not see, as a maritime power, any material difference between our situation now and in the last war, since our single ally at that period had not a ship to lend us.

That his Excellency might be assured our firmness would be equal to our moderation, and that we depended too much on our friends, and were not sufficiently deterred by our enemies, ever to deviate from our national rights, or authorize, by timid cessions, still new and more inadmissible claims.

* They were tampering with our revolted colonies in America.

I had, according to the usual form, and for greater precision prepared the enclosed paper marked C,* and as I had now received repeated proofs that the French and Spanish houses being greatly embarrassed to get home the hemp, and other articles they had contracted for to a considerable amount, had applied to various Russians, who call themselves merchants, and made them very advantageous offers, if they would lend them their name and flag; I thought it highly essential to be very explicit on this point, and, at the same time [redacted] I earnestly requested its not being complied with, [redacted] be silent on the many very serious consequences which the establishing such a fraudulent and undignified commerce would produce; and I must do Count Panin the justice to say, that he not only entirely acquiesced in what I advanced, but after disclaiming in the strongest manner any knowledge of such a design, he promised me that he would use his utmost endeavours to prevent any of Her Imperial Majesty's trading subjects making so improper a use of the protection their Sovereign meant to grant them; and this led him into a discourse on the Declaration, which, after again and again attributing to the Empress alone, and not to himself, he assured me ought not to give us the smallest uneasiness. Your Lordship will be pleased in reading these narrations to observe, that the one, in discoursing with me, was ever striving to make me believe he was acting less in opposition to our interests and views, than he well knew I suspected him to be; while the other, on the contrary, was wishing to convince me that he was promoting them, with more influence and weight than he

* In this Sir James assures Count Panin that "our cruisers will refrain from molesting Russian subjects in the exercise of their commerce, on the solemn assurance of Her Imperial Majesty, that she will not allow her flag to protect and cover this collusory trade, so injurious to Great Britain."

really employed. Some allowances must be made for the insincerity of each, though by no means to be divided in equal portions. Count Panin is *determined* to be our enemy; Prince Potemkin is *disposed* to be our friend; and if he understood the intrigues of the Cabinet, as well as he does those of the Court, he would actually be very effectually so.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT [redacted]MONT.

Petersburg, 15th, 26th May, 1780.

My Lord,—I would willingly hope that Her Imperial Majesty has been struck by a very manly representation and voluntary act of friendship of Admiral Greig. As soon as he read the Declaration, and saw the grounds on which the instructions were to be made, he collected the various sentences which had been pronounced last war in the Archipelago by the Russian Tribunal instituted for that purpose, and at which he frequently presided, on Neutral ships. After proving in the clearest manner that they confiscated and condemned Turkish property wherever they found it, and that the only prizes they made were such property aboard Neutral ships; he gave in the whole to Count Czernicheff, signifying that, as a faithful and affectionate servant of the Empress, he thought himself obliged to set before her eyes, that if she carried her present measures into execution, she would act in direct contradiction to herself. The Count, not from a regard to us, of which he has not a spark, but from the apprehension he is under, that the ships will not be found fit for ocean service, and that, if they sail, he shall be disgraced, certainly gave this paper to the Empress, and as she has the highest notion of the Admiral's capacity and

integrity, his decision may operate strongly with her. Though I live in the most intimate friendship with him, he never mentioned to me this fact, till it was done, and the merit of it is wholly his own.

He assured me, and he spoke in the name of all his countrymen, that if ever the Empress should require of them to serve in a manner hostile to us, they would, to a man, quit her service. Notwithstanding his high rank and lucrative post, I am sure he is sincere, as far as regards himself, and am happy to give this strong and undoubted testimonial of his character and principles. I am sure your Lordship will feel the necessity, both for his sake and mine, of keeping this matter secret.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

(Separate.) Petersburg, 15th, 26th May, 1780.

My Lord,—The present disposition and conduct of this Court was so much beyond the reach of my penetration, and yet so highly necessary to be fathomed, that I was determined to apply, in consequence of the permission I had received from your Lordship, to the only person whom Prince Potemkin admits to his entire confidence, and without whom he can do nothing. I mentioned him in my last despatches, and as I knew him, with every appearance of honesty, to be very venal, used little delicacy in addressing him. After a preface, by no means necessary to trouble your Lordship with, I told him, that it was in my power to do him a very essential service, if he would speak openly and plainly to me. He replied, if I was as well acquainted with the secrets of the public as with his, he could be of no use to me. I

told him, that till he made me as well acquainted with them, I should be of no use to him. Our bargain was soon struck, by telling him I did not want *assistance*, but *information*, assuring him that from what I already knew, I should easily perceive whether he meant to deceive me, and that if he dealt fairly and honestly by me, he might be assured of future marks of liberality.

This being agreed on, I put to him the following questions, requiring to each an explicit and satisfactory answer. What gave rise to the Declaration? Who drew it up? What were the Empress's first intentions, and whether they were still the same? Whether Potemkin is sincere in his show of friendship for me, and in his professions for serving my country? or whether he is only amusing me, and serving our enemies, either in direct concert, or indirectly through the King of Prussia? The steps France and Spain have taken to ingratiate themselves here, and how far they have succeeded?

His answers were. The Declaration was entirely a child of the Empress's own brain, occasioned solely by the conduct of Spain. The Five Points required were in the rough draft she sent to Count Panin, and this Minister had added nothing material of his own in giving it its present form; that he was ignorant who put these Five Points into her head, but as she had, for several months past, seen frequently St. Paul, her agent at Hamburgh, and Count Woronzow at the head of the Commission of Commerce, he believed she had collected them from conversation. At first, from habitual inclination, she leant towards us; since, the insinuations of her Ministers, and the adulation poured in on all sides, have got the better of her predilection, and she seems determined to observe a perfect Neutrality, though to our prejudice.

Prince Potemkin is sincere in what he does and says;

he dislikes the French, is piqued against the King of Prussia, and has turned a deaf ear to some very advantageous proposals that Monarch lately made him. He, however, is not sufficiently zealous in the cause of England, to depart from his habits of indolence and ease; and unless he is roused to activity by the opposition of Count Panin, he will not use his whole influence in our behalf.

The French are indefatigable in the pains they take to get round the Empress. They have innumerable agents, and spare neither expense nor trouble to overset everything we undertake. They have succeeded in adding Count Panin to the strong party they have here; and though the Empress still entertains a mistrust and kind of contempt for them, yet she is pleased with their flattery, and thinks her power and reputation nowhere so well known and so rightly felt as at Versailles.

I asked what he meant by the advantageous proposals made by the King of Prussia to Prince Potemkin? He said, a promise of assistance to obtain the Duchy of Courland, and, if he chose it, to find him a wife amongst some of the German Princesses, none of whom, however, were named. I inquired how the Prince came to reject so flattering an offer. He replied, because he did not believe it sincere, but calculated solely to gain his goodwill during the interview at Mohilow. I asked him what Prince Potemkin thought of this interview, and how he was disposed towards the Court of Vienna. He answered, that the Prince had no regular system of politics; that he was led by impulse of the moment, and he had seen him almost adopt the political principles of every country. That at this moment he was particularly studious to cultivate the Emperor, who, if he chose it, might, by holding out to him promises of a Principality,

or some such lure, fix him to his interests for ever. I then desired him to give me his opinion of the present disposition and temper of this Court. He said it was too confined, too unconnected to admit of any distinction; that the whole depends on events, and that till some important one happened, he who could flatter the best, and give most into the Empress's weaknesses, would predominate; that there was no regular plan, no designs in future, no references to the past, and that I had nothing to do but to apply the habits of the Empress's private life to her public conduct, and I should know just as much as he or any one else. He could only say, that if her greatest enemies flattered her she would give into their views, or be lulled to sleep by their praise; while, on the other hand, if her best and most approved friends resisted her will or opposed any of her measures, she would, in the first moment, be disposed to break with them, and the impression of ill-will would sink deep.

He concluded by saying, that if she was fairly embarked she would never retract, and that if we could contrive once to make her declare herself avowedly our friend, we might be assured of being assisted, if necessary, with the whole force of her Empire.

Here finished our conversation. What he said was so perfectly conformable to what I see, and agrees so well with what I know, that I trust your Lordship will not think the money entirely flung away, as I really believe it has procured a very true, though rather unsatisfactory picture of the state of this Court.

LETTER FROM MR. HARRIS TO HIS FATHER.

Petersburg, May 26, 1780—ten at night.

Honoured Sir,—I must by this messenger be as brief as I was prolix by the last; business increasing, time

being shorter, and various other circumstances, put it out of my power to write to any one of my family but yourself.

Our political state here is one of fermentation, anxiety, and bustle, and I stand single against a host of enemies. I am encouraged greatly by praises and compliments from home; but such encouragement, however pleasing, is not sufficient alone to enable me to bear up against the torrent. I do not despond nor flag, conscious if I fail, some part of the blame must fall on the fluctuating temper of this Court, some on the inattention of ours, and none on me. If I succeed I shall have no partner.

I join a packet of Greek productions given me for you by Prince Potemkin, also a continuation of the collating of Strabo from Matthæus. The music of the Greek hymn by Paesiello, five pounds of coffee just arrived from Constantinople, and a small box, containing a *déjeûner*, from the Princess Wolkowski, for Gertrude.

I am, honoured Sir, &c.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 19th, 30th May, 1780.

My Lord,—Though Count Panin had given me indirectly to understand that the Empress meant nothing more by her armed Neutrality, than that each nation should protect their respective trade, according to their different treaties and regulations; and though, to deceive me the more completely he had expressed himself in the same manner to his own people and confidants, yet my messenger was scarce departed, when he began upon a project of a *Convention in direct contradiction to this principle.* It is to be signed by the five Neutral powers

in which they are all to agree to stand by each other in the maintenance of the Declaration they are previously to make, which is to be a *fac-simile* of that from Russia; and to stipulate, *that if the trade of any one of them is molested, all are to join to vindicate the honour of their flag, and the rights of their injured subjects.* He laboured at this performance all Saturday—luckily he is not an expeditious workman — and being, from the vigilance of my friends, immediately advertised of this intention, I had time the same evening to prepare and send by a very confidential person to Prince Potemkin the inclosed letter,* which, I am certain, will reach him before Count Panin is ready. So I trust, if there is a remnant of judgment in the Sovereign, or a spark of sincerity in the favourite, that the plain and honest truth it contains will prevent the success of this abominable intrigue. I can take no steps to check it here. I am surrounded by foes and hostile faces, and my arguments and representations would irritate instead of persuading them, and, by artful misconstructions, be turned all against me. I have dwelt in my letter very strongly on the fatal consequences of this measure being carried into execution, hoping that *fear* may operate if *reason* fails.

* In this letter Sir J. Harris urges Potemkin to use his influence to get Prince Galitzin recalled from the Hague, where he was completely identified with French interests.

He adds, that our enemies, "qui en Europe font plus de bruit que de besogne," would have made peace this year, were it not for the "Declaration" of the Empress. He concludes by assuring him that England will defend herself to the last extremity—"Pour à présent je ne vois plus la fin de la guerre, et si toute l'Europe se reunissoit contre nous, *la Paix ne se feroit que quand nous n'aurions plus rien a defendre.*

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO HUGH ELLIOT, ESQ.*

Petersburg, 2nd, 13th June, 1780.

DEAR SIR,—Letters have been received from Mohilow of the 27th of May.

The Emperor arrived there the 23rd, and the Empress the 25th. Count Cobenzel presented him to Her Imperial Majesty by the title of Count Falckenstein. After a residence of five days at this place, their Imperial Majesties supped the 30th at Schkow, a country seat of General Zoritz, and then proceeded together to Smolensko; from thence the Empress will continue her route according to her original plan, and the Emperor visits Moscow. He is to remain in that ancient capital four days, and, after having seen everything worthy his curiosity, to proceed to this, where he is expected nearly about the same time as Her Imperial Majesty. Every letter received is full of the satisfaction these august personages reciprocally felt at their interview; and the amiable qualities of the Emperor seem particularly calculated to suit a Sovereign, who possesses the art of pleasing in so eminent a degree.

The Prussian party is very much alarmed by this prolongation of the Emperor's residence in this country, particularly as there is no doubt of its having been suggested by the Empress, who, besides the being flattered by such a visiter, appears uncommonly struck with his easy manner and agreeable behaviour. He, on his side, has taken great pains to please; and, suiting himself entirely to her character, praised indiscriminately everything she has done, or is doing; and I am sorry to say, in this general encomium, he did not omit the "Declaration," though I would willingly hope, it was mentioned more as a good

* English Minister at Berlin.

intention, than as a measure from which any good could arise.

Prince Potemkin is very assiduous in paying his court, and endeavouring, by unwearied attentions, to efface some unpleasant impressions he knows the Court of Vienna entertains of his character and sentiments.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT M. KEITH, VIENNA.

Petersburg, June, 1780.

DEAR SIR,—You cannot be unacquainted with the uneasiness of the *Vieux de la Montagne*,* at the interview to take place at Mohilow. He has employed every trick the black art of politics is capable of to prevent its effacing the impressions he has made here, and diminishing an influence which seems, at some periods, to have arisen almost from fascination.

He also (such a credulity has he hitherto found here) talks of his own moderation, his disinterestedness, and public spirit; draws a pathetical picture of his age and ailings, and adds flattery and sentiment to deceit and cunning; all these insinuations, to which he joins many sarcasms on the Emperor's private character, are conveyed here through his Minister Count Goertz, a man of parts and knowledge, worthy a better master, but who, used to move in the narrow circle of Weymar and Deux Ponts, is rather *déplacé* on this wide and singular sphere.

You would do very little justice to the character of the Empress of Russia, if you supposed she admitted all this trash to dwell upon her mind, or that she was not enlightened enough to see the motives of such a language. Be assured she does see them, that she is cloyed with

* Nickname of Frederick the Great.

Prussian flattery; that her eyes begin to open on this subject, and there is every advantage to be expected from the comparison she will make between the simple unaffected conduct of the Emperor, and the political *commerage* of the King of Prussia. Prince Potemkin, who often talks to me very confidentially, has been very inquisitive to me concerning the character of the Emperor; and I was very happy to have received a few days ago a letter from Lord Stormont, in which he speaks eloquently, and with the warmth of gratitude and almost affection, of this Monarch.

You shall soon hear more; in the meantime, be assured the Empress loves us *as a nation*, and though she has a little spice of the opposition in her character, yet she will never do us half so much harm as those profligate rascally patriots at home, who, in times like these, are abandoned enough to add to foreign wars, domestic broils and discontents.* I think to curse them must be a merit in the sight of the Lord. I dread the iniquitous temper they have raised, more than twenty combined fleets; since I am fully convinced that we should, if unanimous and true to ourselves, beat them all.

Adieu! my dear Sir; let me hear from you often, very often, if it is in your power: you will ever find me a grateful correspondent.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 9th, 20th June, 1780.

My Lord,—I had great pleasure in the perusal of the Extraordinary Gazette, inclosed in your Lordship's letter

* Lord George Gordon's riots took place this year.

of the 26th of May. Besides the glory it reflects on the commander* of the British West India fleet, it opens a very pleasant prospect for the success of His Majesty's arms in that part of the globe.

I am sorry that the intelligence I must send from hence is of a different nature. The Convention I endeavoured so strenuously to overthrow, returned here on Sunday, approved by Her Imperial Majesty, with no very material alteration. Count Panin has since been hard at work to send copies of it to the Russian Ministers, at the several Neutral States, and to most of them couriers will be despatched to-day and to-morrow. I have written to His Majesty's Ministers at these courts, informing them of this fact, and have been particularly explicit in my letter to Mr. Eden,† since I cannot think, after the very sensible and sound reasoning of Mr. de Bernsdorff,‡ and after his having opposed the completion of this general league, by every argument he could venture to use, that he will ever be prevailed upon to sign a treaty in direct contradiction to his principles and avowed opinion. It is from this quarter alone, we must now expect, either that this strange confederacy will be broken through, or its being put into execution suspended. Here, the ideas of giving laws to Europe, or perhaps the still more absurd one of forcing a peace, has taken such deep root in the Empress's mind, that she runs blindfold into all the extravagances her Minister proposes. Prince Potemkin has been very candid on this occasion ; he sent with the same courier that brought this disagreeable packet, a near relative and namesake of his, and a person in whom he has the greatest confidence, with orders to acquaint me with what had passed ; to assure me how-

* Rodney. † Mr. Eden was English Minister at Copenhagen.
‡ Danish Minister.

ever, that I still ought not to give way to uneasiness; that the Empress never meant to distress or embarrass us, and that the moment she saw her conduct would produce this effect, she certainly would recede; that on his pressing her strongly to desist from persevering in her plan, and to sit down contented with the proof she had already received of the deference and respect the greatest nations had for her opinion, she lost her temper, and said, that no one but herself saw the end of what she proposed, and on this occasion declared she would not be checked by any advice whatsoever.

Prince Potemkin added, that this was the language of heat and passion, and ought to be considered as such. Time, he said, would work a change, and he well knew how to take advantage of her disposition and habit of mind. I wish he may not be mistaken; I should doubt even his sincerity, knowing his great influence, if this conversation between him and his Sovereign had not been confirmed to me by respectable collateral intelligence, absolutely independent of him, or of any of his connexion.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 12th, 23rd June, 1780.

My Lord,—The fleet sailed from Cronstadt at five o'clock Wednesday evening with a fair breeze; as, however, it was calm yesterday, and to-day the wind is changed, they cannot be got far from port. I sent down a person of confidence to attend to everything which passed. He is returned, and assures me that the confu-

sion and hurry which preceded its sailing, could only be equalled by the discontent and dejection of the men and officers, when under sail; that the commanders are as strongly impressed with these sentiments as their subalterns, and go with the utmost reluctance on an expedition which promises neither glory nor profit. The crews, though complete, are not sea-faring men, and have a sickly cadaverous look. The ships are well-rigged and make a fine appearance; but their timbers are old, and not sound, and they would be ill able to resist a hard gale on the ocean, or a well-directed broadside: such are the remarks of a sensible accurate observer.

When the Convention was signed, Sir James Harris requested Lord Stormont to recall him, but his demand was refused; and Mr. Fox, who succeeded Lord Stormont, urged him, in the strongest manner, to keep his post.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 15th, 26th June, 1780.

My Lord,—The doubts I had of Prince Potemkin's fidelity being shaken, have indeed disappeared, and I should shelter myself under a falsehood if I was to attempt to attribute any part of what has happened to a duplicity in him. But he is of a complexion to be influenced ever by the impulse of the moment, and to be wrought upon by what strikes his fancy and imagination, without consulting his judgment and reason. He, besides, is not of a character to persist in a uniform predilection, either for the same person, or the same cause; and the most trifling incidents may create a sudden and

total alteration in every part of his conduct. On the other side, I have the strongest confirmation of the opinionative systematic hatred of Count Panin, whose inveteracy against England, after brooding ten or twelve years, now breaks forth with all the acrimony of an enemy who has been forced so long to wear the mask of a friend. He is vindictive, unforgiving; and though his passions are too deep-rooted ever to appear in his countenance, they are ever active in his mind, and their operations are only the surer for being slow. I have the disagreeable advantage of knowing beyond a doubt, that he has done me the honour to include me, *particularly*, in the general anathema he has pronounced against the nation, and will bear me an everlasting ill-will, for not patiently and tamely submitting to be deceived by him, and becoming the instrument of his purposes, at the expense of my understanding, of my duty, and of my integrity. With such a friend and such an enemy, I have much to fear, and little to hope. The shortest notice may place me instantaneously in the most disagreeable situation, and make me, not only absolutely unfit to be of the smallest service here; but, by being without the confidence of any one; having lost every means of getting at the Empress; and certain that everything I say or do will be misconstrued, and invidiously applied, every step I attempt to take must be productive of mischief and harm; and, instead of retrieving, I shall effectually destroy the remnant of our interests here.

It is from this consideration alone that I have entered so minutely into the character of these two persons, and into my own particular situation; and I submit it entirely to your Lordship's judgment and opinion, to decide whether it would not be infinitely important for His Majesty's service, that I should be removed from hence,

to have a Minister named less obnoxious to Count Panin, and who, by making a discreet use of the road I have opened, and taught by my experience, may do His Majesty that service, which it was my greatest, and sole ambition to effect, but to which my abilities and zeal have been found inadequate.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 23rd June, 4th July, 1780.

My Lord,—I am now to give your Lordship an account of an interesting conference I had with Prince Potemkin on Saturday morning. I found him alone, and at leisure, and endeavoured to make the best use of these circumstances. As I am convinced that the alterations in the Empress's intentions arise solely from his neglecting to watch and counteract the operations of the opposite party, I was resolved to speak plainly. I began by saying, that a year had now elapsed since I first began to talk confidentially with him on business; that he then had invited me to it himself, by a declaration of his political sentiments; and from this motive, as well as from his superior influence, it was with greater pleasure I had connected myself with him: that the attention with which he ever heard me, the readiness he expressed to serve me, and, above all, the great distinctions I had received from the Empress since that period, had induced me to believe I had not been guilty of an error, and that relying on what he said he was disposed to do, and satisfied of his abilities of doing it, I had foregone, without a regret, those advantages I drew from my former connexions, and had seen with indifference the jealousy

and animosity of the Empress's Ministers gathering against me, and growing in proportion as my intimacy with him increased. That I would not conceal from him, my first solicitude was the affairs of my Court, and I began to be fearful that, when I committed the care of them to him, I had rated too high both his expressions and influence, and perhaps mistook his inclinations for his real intentions; that if I had, I was not the only person mistaken, since Count Panin and all his adherents were so fully convinced that I should receive efficacious assistance from him, that their having deprived me of it, and having given another direction to the Empress's sentiments, was to them a matter both of triumph and surprise: and that, while they were astonished that their feeble interest got the better of his, they could not refuse themselves a satisfaction quite new to them, of boasting, that they had overreached, duped, and deceived him; that if he knew how this sunk him in the esteem of the public, or could foresee the attempts, this, the success of their first essay, would induce them to make, I was sure he would be roused from his state of inactivity, and, for his own security as well as for his own glory, not suffer their opinions and party to obtain any degree of maturity.

Prince Potemkin had given uncommon attention to what I said, and I saw plainly from his countenance that it made an impression on him. He agreed with me in everything I had advanced relative to the character and sentiments of the opposite party, but was far from admitting their being in a situation to do any essential harm. He treated them with the greatest contempt, and said that, even if he could get rid of them, he did not see anybody better to put in their places. He assured me that the present humour of mind of the Empress would

not last, and that the only way of giving it duration was by resistance and opposition; that if left to herself she would return to her former principles. The flattery of France pleased her, but it had not persuaded her.

I replied to him, that they bore so strong an appearance of mischief that it was impossible for me, when talking to him, not to show my uneasiness, and to express myself seriously; that I wore a more placid countenance when conversing with others, but this tranquillity would never be real till I saw him exerting himself strenuously and with vigour; that from a want of this exertion everything I had proposed had failed; that if he did no more, he had better have done nothing at all, since, to the multitude, it would appear either that he was deceiving me, or that he had not power to assist me, &c.

He intreated me again and again to be easy; that all would go right, and that he knew enough of the Empress's character to be certain of what he said. Our conversation got on other subjects, which as they do not relate to the business of the day, may find a place in some future letters.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

St. James's, 14th July, 1780.

I AM not surprised that you are greatly disgusted with the strange turn of affairs at Petersburg, but at the same time you must, I am sure, be sensible that your quitting your station at this time would be highly prejudicial to the King's service, and would in one sense be disagreeable to yourself, as it would be a sort of triumph to your enemies, who are so anxious to have you leave your post

because they know you fill it with great ability. Steadiness, temper, and unwearied perseverance, may yet produce a change. Let what will happen, justice will ever be done you by all those who know your conduct, but by nobody more than by him who is with great truth and regard,

Your most obedient servant, STORMONT.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 7th, 18th July, 1780.

THE new French Minister* by no means succeeds with the Empress; he blundered in his speech at his audience, and has since displeased her by an appearance of familiarity and disrespect. On the other hand, she treats me with more distinction and affability than ever; and, if experience had not made me diffident, I should infer from her conversation the most pleasing consequences. I see her daily, and she is constantly expressing her satisfaction at our successes, and her desire of their being still more complete. In discoursing with me on the late disorders in London,† she said she understood that one of her subjects had been principally concerned in the destruction of the Sardinian Minister's chapel, and that he had been released on the requisition of Mons. de Simolin. She was sorry, she said, her Minister had applied in his behalf, and most sincerely wished we had brought him to his trial. That in any country whatsoever, a stranger concerned in an insurrection deserved no mercy; but in a country like ours, where the laws were so mild and so wisely administered, he was doubly culpable. She added, that though he had escaped justice in England

* M. de Verac.

† Lord G. Gordon's riots.

it awaited him here, and that it would meet him the moment he set foot in her Empire. I replied to her, as her clemency was equal to her justice, I hoped she would not inflict a capital punishment on him, but consider it as an error into which he was led by bad example, and by the impetuosity of youth; that certainly by our laws he was guilty of high treason, but that the moment it was known he belonged to her, the respect and deference the nation had for Her Imperial Majesty induced us to strain a point, and allow him to depart unpunished. She appeared much pleased with what I said, and assured me repeatedly that our confidence in her was not ill-bestowed.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 14th, 25th July, 1780.

COUNT FALKENSTEIN* left Peterhoff on Wednesday. He has for ever given a very severe stroke to the King of Prussia's influence, so deep a one that I almost doubt its recovery.

I do not find that, except a kind of complimentary approbation of her Declaration the first day of his arrival at Mohilow, that he has ever entered into the consequences of the present Neutral league; or, indeed, except in general terms, talked of the war between us and the Courts of Bourbon. In general terms, however, he gave it clearly to be understood that his good wishes went with us; and he never failed of turning into ridicule the character of the French nation, and the weakness of their Sovereign. He rated him even below the King of Naples.

* Name assumed by the Emperor of Austria during his visit at Petersburg.

The Emperor himself treated me with great attention, and, as he perceived the Empress distinguished me remarkably, he followed her example. He told me, and it is strictly true, that if I would once drive out of her head Opposition principles, she would go any lengths for us, as it was evident, from every part of her conversation, that she was enthusiastically fond of our nation, and was withheld from assisting us merely because she was in Opposition.* Though his presents here are numerous and magnificent, yet those who have received them are far from being satisfied. Indeed, I never recollect on these occasions, that the donors did not think they had given too much, and the receivers that they had got too little.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR JOSEPH YORKE, HAGUE.

Petersburg, 14th, 25th July, 1780.

DEAR SIR, — Your Excellency may rely on my exertion; my spirits and courage never have flagged, and I only despond from the nature and force of my opponents, not from my own feelings. Their inveteracy increases, and they really flatter me by this persecution. The King of Prussia animates them to this personal war; but it is idle to think that my successor, whoever he may be, would do his duty less rigidly than myself. I, however, stand better than ever at Court, and enjoy Prince Potemkin's entire confidence and support; and, could I cure him of the most unaccountable carelessness and inattention, we should soon triumph. These vices hurt him as much as me; and if he does not bestir himself we shall fall together, though with this difference, that his fall will be somewhat more severe than mine.

* The Empress had an almost romantic admiration of Mr. Fox.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Tuesday, 21st July, 1st August, 1780.

I SPENT part of last week at a country-house of Prince Potemkin's in Finland. Nobody was with us but a select part of his family, and I had him, when not employed with them, in a manner entirely to myself. It would be superfluous to repeat to your Lordship what passed in our four days' conversation. It is sufficient to say, that I had an opportunity of investigating his character to the bottom, and that I really believe he spoke freer and more openly with me than he would have ventured to have done with any person in the empire. He certainly is strongly disposed to be our friend, and has never deceived me. He recapitulated with an incredible accuracy, everything which had passed between us, and pointed out from conference to conference all he had said to the Empress, and attempted to do, in our behalf. He told me, that at certain moments she seemed determined to join us; but that the idea of bringing on herself the sarcasms of the King of Prussia and of France, and, above all, the dread of losing the reputation she enjoyed by ill success, restrained her, and that under these impressions the enervating language of Count Panin was better listened to than anything which fell from him. That, however, in the present instance, she began to feel she had been influenced by her Minister too far, and though she was too proud to recant, yet he was persuaded she repented of having embarked so far and so inconsiderately in this Neutral league. He called it "the child of faction and of folly," and that if left to itself it could not last.

He added, that she began also to be tired of the favorite, and that his fall was not very distant. "When

things go on smoothly," continued the Prince, "my influence is small; but when she meets with rubs she always wants me, and then my influence becomes as great as ever." This will soon be the case, and I shall certainly take advantage of it in some shape or other. He ridiculed the Danish and Swedish fleets, particularly the latter, which, he said, was so rotten that a royal salute would shake it to pieces. He seemed piqued with the King of Prussia, and to have a natural aversion for the French and Spaniards. It would be endless if I was to write all he said. He was in perfect good humour the whole time, and discovered a mixture of wit, levity, learning, and humour, I never met in the same man. His way of life is as singular as his character; his hours for eating and sleeping are uncertain, and we were frequently airing in the rain in an open carriage at midnight.

This visit of mine will give the greatest uneasiness to the Prussians and French, particularly as not only no strangers, but even no Russian but his nearest relations, were ever admitted to be of this annual party. Indeed, it is my intimacy with him that gives me importance, and induces them to attack me with such inveteracy.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Tuesday 21st July, 1st Aug., 1780.

At the time of the attempt to burn the Russian fleet, every one imputed it to the nation and people against whom they were the most indisposed. Count Panin fixed it on the English sailors, and impressed the Grand-Duke with this idea. The Prussian and Dutch Ministers, in their despatches, affirmed *that I was the promoter of it*, and the postmasters of Memel and Konigsberg, the usual

channel for the conveyance of lies from hence, together with the Gazetteer of Cleves, spread about the most absurd and ridiculous reports. I felt that I should vilify myself by taking notice of them; and though I well knew Count Panin would mention them to the Empress, yet I rather chose to abide by what I hoped was Her Imperial Majesty's settled opinion of me, than have recourse to my friends on this occasion. The event justified my conduct; the Empress treated the whole as an idle tale, and, since her return, has distinguished me more than ever. My adversaries, however, were too keen to be disheartened, and they have been just endeavouring to bring the accusation home by employing the dirty agents, and dirty means, set forth in the enclosed paper. Forewarned of their intentions, and acquainted with every step they took, I thought it proper, before their scheme was ripe, to divulge the whole to Prince Potemkin, not because I was apprehensive of their succeeding, but because I wished the Empress to see the temper and illiberal character of my opponents. I was likewise happy to have so good an opportunity of introducing Mr. Sayre* in his true colours. Prince Potemkin gave in my paper immediately, and the next day delivered me the Empress's answer in her own words: "L'Americain ne peut vous faire nulle part, si peu de mal que chez moi; méprisez les bruits qu'on répand comme je les méprise: ils ne font aucune impression sur moi, et je croirois vous injurier si j'y faisois attention."

However flattering this answer may be, I was free to confess to the Prince, that I wished some further notice had been taken of it, since I was sure they would never

* An American agent, spy, and speculator at Petersburg, who accused the English of being the authors of the fire, and attempted to get compensation for the fictitious loss of a ship, in which application he was defeated by Sir J. Harris.

desist till they were frightened into silence. I then told him what I knew to be fact, that Count Goertz had said to one of his intimates, that he felt he was propagating a falsehood, but that it was *his master's repeated orders to get me removed at all events.* The Dutchman, though without orders, acted on the same principles, and Count Panin had in a manner frightened all my colleagues from my house by joining himself to this band of calumniators. He replied, "Have patience, conceal your uneasiness, they have overshot the mark, and if you let them alone, they will destroy themselves."

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 28th July, 8th Aug., 1780.

My Lord,—R * * *, the Russian officer who was taken in the act of destroying Mons. de Cordon's chapel, and afterwards released, came to Cronstadt under a fictitious name on Thursday last. He was soon discovered, and the Empress immediately sent orders to arrest him. He, however, contrived to escape from thence, and could not be met with till yesterday morning, when he was taken just as he was going to embark for Holland, and he is now in custody. Your Lordship is not ignorant that he is an illegitimate child of Count * * *, *, a very distinguished family here; that he is a favourite with his father, and of course that this measure occasions a great sensation here, and indicates to the minds of the Russians a much stronger predilection for England than I fear exists.

Potemkin, who told me all this yesterday, seems to insinuate that he believed there was something very bad at the bottom of this conduct, and that even the Empress

had strong suspicions of R * * * not having acted simply from his own head. As I had no information to give him on the subject, I neither could admit nor reject these surmises; I only recommended to him to search his papers, amongst which I know he will find a letter from Count Panin, advising him to retire out of the country. Whenever Her Imperial Majesty has mentioned the subject to me, I have ever recommended him to her mercy, and entreated her not to punish severely a crime committed through levity and ignorance of the consequences. She never, however, would admit my apology, and yesterday was almost angry with me for still holding the same language.

NOTE FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 21st Aug., 1st Sept., 1780.

My Lord,—R * * * is still in confinement in the fortress. He has been strictly examined, but nothing appears from his examination but much folly, and a strong disposition to riot and mischief. Nothing likewise was found among his papers by any means material. His friends wish to have him sent to a convent, where people disordered in their senses are shut up, but the Empress seems determined that he shall go to Siberia.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 28th Aug., 8th Sept., 1780.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Prussia arrived here on Wednesday evening, accompanied by General Goertz, and Mons. Vittinghoff.

The interview between him and the Empress, which took place yesterday morning with great ceremony and etiquette, was, I believe, very little satisfactory to either. He appeared to her heavy, reserved, and awkward ; and her reception struck him as cool, formal, and unpromising. In the evening, little ground was gained ; and the Empress, though at her Hermitage, where she is generally very talkative, took no further notice of him than decency or common attention required.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 4th, 15th Sept., 1780.

I AM labouring with the greatest pains to stir up Prince Potemkin ; it certainly is a most favourable moment for him to move, but his idleness and sloth are unparalleled. I have been with him all to-day and yesterday, and urged every motive I could suggest to him, to make him act with consistency, and with more vigour. He admits everything I say, promises everything I ask, but is diverted from his performance by some dirty Court intrigue, or some still less important concern. I, however, must do him the justice to say, he has been very useful in obtaining the flat refusal to the proposal for the Guarantee,* which otherwise would have been given in very ambiguous terms. He assures me I shall have a *private interview ;* and I shall consider, as I told him this morning, his procuring me this, as the test of the sincerity of his friendship.

* The Dutch Plenipotentiaries asked the Empress for a general guarantee of all their possessions, which she refused ; saying, that she never could become a guarantee for any of their territories, in or out of Europe, but that she was willing to admit the States-General to the convention recently signed by the three Northern Courts.—*Harris Papers.*

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 15th, 26th September, 1780.

Your Lordship will perceive, from the manner in which the Prince of Prussia passes his time, how little progress he makes; the greatest pains were taken yesterday to induce the Empress to have an entertainment at Court, but she absolutely refused it. On Sunday she broke off abruptly her card party, and, as I was sitting next to her, gave me clearly to understand, that it was from her being worn out by the heaviness of the Prince of Prussia, who sat on the other side of her. Her behaviour to the Prince de Ligne, which is clearly designed, is the strongest contrast to her conduct towards the Prince of Prussia, and nothing hurts him and his friends so much as the pleasure and satisfaction she and Prince Potemkin express in his society.

He has been of the greatest use to me on this occasion, and I shall, if possible, prevail upon him to stay a week longer, as he has the talent, under the mask of pleasantry, of conveying to the Empress the most important truths. Count Cobenzel seems in a state of stupefaction, and though he has a golden moment for completing what his master begun, he does not make the smallest use of it.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 22nd Sept., 3rd Oct., 1780.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Prussia assisted yesterday morning at a public meeting of the Academy, and supped with a small society at Prince Potemkin's. Sun-

day he dined and supped with their Imperial Highnesses, and yesterday passed the evening at Count Cobenzel's.

His Royal Highness is endeavouring to bring over Prince Potemkin, and, if possible, to obtain through him a more favourable reception at the latter end of his residence; I however do not believe that he is likely to succeed, neither if he did, that even Prince Potemkin has influence enough to overcome the aversion the Empress has conceived for him. After insinuating, by every kind of means, that it would be agreeable to her if he would fix his departure for an early day, she at last has ordered her private Secretary to tell Count Panin, very plainly, that he must contrive to get him away soon, as she felt if he stayed much longer she might say something rude to him. However strange this may appear, I can assure your Lordship it is fact. In public she treats him with a coolness and reserve quite foreign to her character, and never speaks to any of his suite. At the masquerade on Friday, and at Court on Sunday, he did not play at cards with her; it is the more remarkable, as, to make room for me on my coming after she was set down, she made Prince Bariatinsky give me his place.

While she is behaving with this very unusual neglect to the Prussian party, she is paying the most marked attention to everything which regards the Court of Vienna. She told Count Cobenzel, before the Prince of Prussia and all his attendants, that a day never passed that she did not recollect and regret Count Falkenstein; and is profuse to the Prince of Ligne in her expressions of regard and admiration for the Emperor. This conduct, so different from what the Prince of Prussia expected, and which he is sure will expose him to the ill-will and anger of his uncle on his return, has so far affected him, that he is still less at his ease than at Berlin.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 25th Sept., 6th Oct., 1780.

THE departure of Prince Potemkin at this moment is considered, what in fact it is, a mark of inattention to the Prince of Prussia. I stayed with him till he got into his carriage, and when every one was retired, had with him a very long and interesting conversation. He was more than usually communicative, and spoke of the character of the Empress, the present state of the empire, and his own particular situation, in a manner which indicates the soundest judgment and penetration, and at the same time the most perfect reliance on my discretion and secrecy. The nature of a cyphered despatch would admit but of a very imperfect account of what passed, and till a safer conveyance offers, it will be perhaps sufficient to say, that the whole of his sentiments and language indicates a strong disposition to serve us, and a fixed disinclination, both from principle and character, to the French.

I am certain every attempt the Prussians may have made to gain him has failed, and that nothing less than a miracle can now make any alteration in the behaviour or sentiments of the Empress towards the Prince Royal. I have been for these three days witness to such slights and inattention she has shown him, that I have been amazed at his patience and temper. Tuesday, at Mons. Nariskin's, Master of the Horse, she neither played, nor asked him to sup at her table, to which she admitted none but myself, her favourite, and Prince Potemkin. Yesterday, at the masquerade, she appeared under the mask, and immediately on her coming in took me to accompany her through the apartments saying, "Ne me quittez pas

de toute la soirée ; je vous ai fait Chevalier, et je veux, que vous me défendiez contre les ennuyeux." She stayed from seven till ten, and took not the smallest notice of the Prince, or any of his followers ; nor indeed scarce of any one but Lady Harris and myself. Your Lordship may easily guess how these distinctions alarm my enemies, and create envy and jealousy in my colleagues. I feel myself most unfortunate that, while I enjoy these distinctions in such an uncommon degree, I cannot derive from them the only advantages I am solicitous about; that nothing I undertake succeeds; and that those she evidently despises and ill-treats appear to direct her political conduct and sentiments.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 29th Sept., 10th Oct., 1780.

His Royal Highness has fixed his departure for Saturday next. He has presented Count Panin with his picture in a ring covered with a single diamond, and has given Major-General Potemkin a snuff-box, and a ring richly set in brilliants.

The Empress will be less profuse in her presents than usual. She destines for the Prince a souvenir of about 8,000 roubles' value ; four pieces of gold and silver brocade, forty pounds weight of rhubarb, and as much of tea. Count Goertz will have a handsome box, his brother a ring of a single stone, and the others will be gratified in proportion.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Tuesday 29th Sept., 10th Oct., 1780.

My Lord,—I have for a long time been without the smallest doubt of there subsisting the most perfect understanding between Mons. de Panin,* and Mons. de Vergennes, and your Lordship's intelligence confirms me in my opinion. My great object is to open the Empress's eyes on this subject, or at least to discover whether she is in the secret. If she is, every effort of mine will be in vain. If she is not, she must be lost to every sense of her own dignity, to the interests of her nation, and even to her own security, if, when she sees the part her Minister is acting, and the errors into which he has hurried her, she does not reclaim, and return to the only path in which she can tread with honour and safety.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 2nd, 13th October, 1780.

There was not the smallest change in the Empress's behaviour to the last. She expressed a uniform disgust and ennui whenever her illustrious visitor was present, and in speaking of him, ever rated his talents and abilities at the lowest pitch. Notwithstanding the many powerful agents and friends he and his party have here, I am satisfied he has not succeeded in anything he has undertaken; that he has confirmed, not diminished, the high opinion the Empress entertains of Count Falken-

* The Court of France had acquainted Count Panin with the secret article, above-mentioned, of their treaty with Spain. Vide p. 290.

stein, and that he has sunk the interests of his uncle still lower, instead of retrieving them. Prince Potemkin did not choose his niece should give him a supper.

In short, he is gone away displeased and disgusted.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 6th, 17th October, 1780.

I AM now to give your Lordship an account of the manner in which I have executed the orders contained in your Lordship's letter.* Through the common ministerial channel, I was certain His Majesty's sentiments and intentions either would never reach the Empress at all, or get to her so disfigured as to produce effects diametrically opposite to those they ought to do. Prince Potemkin was the only person on whom I could rely, and I had luckily, as your Lordship will see in mine, Sep. 1—12, anticipated your instructions in a conversation I then had with him.

I represented to him in the most forcible terms the necessity that its contents should be candidly and impartially stated to the Empress, that she might see, while it was yet time, the dangers to which she exposed England, the difficulties in which she would involve herself, and the ruin to which she devoted Holland, if she joined with the Dutch in support of their unjust claims and ungrateful conduct, &c.

I had no other view than to advertise Her Imperial Majesty of the dangerous ground on which she was tread-

* A despatch from Lord Stormont, Sept. 19th, instructing Sir James to use his influence with the Empress to prevent her coming forward to support the Dutch.

ing, of opening her eyes to her own welfare and interests, and of recalling her, before it was too late, from a step fraught with the most fatal consequences to herself and her best friends;—that he was the only person to whom I could address myself, and that if, on this occasion, he was as reluctant as he had been on some others of conveying what I said to his Sovereign, I foresaw that the two Courts would inevitably disagree, and if they did disagree, he would, in a great measure, be responsible for the event. I begged he would forgive my sincerity, &c.

He said, and it is, I believe, perfectly true, that of late his enemies have made her think that he is ignorant of foreign concerns, that he acts entirely under impressions he receives from me, without consulting the good of the Empire or her personal glory. He, however, on my repeating to him how singularly unfortunate it would be that two great Empires should quarrel, merely because factions and prejudiced people prevent Her Imperial Majesty from hearing the plain truth, promised me that he would make a point of her seeing me in private, and assured me that hitherto he had never been able to obtain this interview, though she had promised it several times.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 16th, 27th October, 1780.

My Lord,—I have not been able to obtain any further information on the Empress's intended offer of Mediation.* Prince Potemkin declares his ignorance of this measure, and that nothing of the kind appears amongst the papers sent to him. I, however, am certain of the

* The Empress offered to mediate between the belligerent powers—England, France, and Spain.

fact, and that a courier will be despatched with it to London in a few days. It is not in my power to discover on what principle the Empress acts. It is a secret deposited in her own breast; but her professions of regard and friendship towards the King and our nation on Wednesday were so strong, so gratuitous and unusual at a public audience, that if, under this tender she covers pernicious and unfriendly designs, she uses an artifice that will tarnish the lustre of her reign, and sink her reputation for ever. I find it every day more difficult to do business here. Prince Potemkin is either not able or afraid to assist me, and my enemies have in their possession every other avenue of the Court. Your Lordship, however, may be assured I will struggle to the last.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, Friday, 23rd Oct., 3rd Nov., 1780.

After Count Panin had finished what he had to say on the subject of the Russian ships which had been carried in by our cruizers, he fell into a discourse on the present situation of public affairs, and, I am sorry to say, held a language very little becoming the mouth of a Russian Minister. He rated very high the prudence, the moderation, the good conduct, of our enemies, and by lavishing his praises on *them*, indirectly blamed *us*. He dwelt much on their strength, on their resources, on their spirit; and after, from these premises, inferring that we were in every point unequal to the contest in which we were engaged, and that nothing could result to us from its continuation, but distress and ruin, he strongly advised our making peace. Peace, he added, is now become necessary to us; that experience taught us, that

even in a naval war we could be matched; and that we must perceive how impossible it was for us to maintain that superiority at sea, and those pretensions annexed to it, contingencies alone, in all the preceding wars, had allowed us to enjoy;—that the general disposition of Europe was averse to it, and that those who wished us most sincerely well, could not give a stronger mark of their friendship, than by recommending peace, on terms which might meet the ideas of *all* the belligerent powers.

He was much more diffuse, but I relate the sum of what he said: when he had done, I asked him whether he spoke to me in consequence of orders from the Empress or not, and whether I was to consider what I had heard as her sentiments, or simply as his own. He replied he had no orders from the Empress on the subject, and gave it me, as his own opinion, merely to prove his regard and esteem. I told him that everything demonstrative of those sentiments in him, would give great satisfaction to my Court, who was ever inclined to consider him as the friendly minister of a friendly Sovereign; that he could not be a friend to his own country if he was an enemy to ours; that I admitted peace to be a most desirable event, but I knew enough of the character of the nation to which I belonged, to be certain it would rather labour under the burthen, and be exposed to the dangers of a war for ever, than purchase it by dishonourable concessions; that I saw a good deal of flattery, much cunning, and infinite boasting in the conduct of our enemies; that I believed from my heart, their resources were most of them exhausted and all known, while I was satisfied we had many still perfect and unexplored; that our strength, when tried, had ever been found unimpaired, and that his Excellency would recollect we were not contending for superiority, but solely defending ourselves

against the most unjust attack ever made on the liberty and dignity of a nation.

Count Panin in reply, endeavoured to prove, that the honour of France was at stake, and argued the Bourbon cause with as much warmth, but with less eloquence, than the Minister of Versailles would have done; he seemed quite forgetful of our honour, of the original motive of the war, and, if I had a doubt remaining, would have confirmed me, that from him we never must expect anything but evil. Whether by thus throwing off the mask he meant to intimidate and perplex me, or whether he was in hopes, by the many friendly expressions with which he larded his discourse, of imposing upon me, I cannot pretend to say.

The Dutch Republic was now daily becoming more inimical in its feelings and acts. The unpopularity of the Stadtholder, the prospect of opening a new and lucrative trade with America, the promises of France to support the Dutch, and the successes of our revolted colonies, contributed to urge them to extreme measures. They were now still farther excited by admittance into the Armed Neutrality. Sir Joseph Yorke claimed from them the succours they were bound to give us by the treaty of 1716, and a restoration of Paul Jones prizes, which they had harboured, and in March 1780, in consequence of their refusal, declared to the States that England conceived, that they had disqualified themselves from all the privileges they enjoyed from former treaties.

After this, the papers of Mr. Laurens, President of Congress, were seized, among which was found "a treaty of amity and commerce between the Republic of Holland

and the United States of America." England, in consequence of this treacherous act of her ally, declared war against Holland on the 20th of December, and was now to contend single-handed against four nations, three of which, were, after herself, the most powerful at sea.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 17th, 28th November, 1780.

NOTHING very material is at this moment going on here; the arrival of the Dutch courier, will, in a few days, probably render the scene more interesting. Count Panin is working every engine to ensure the success of this negotiation.* He conceals, with the greatest pains, from Her Imperial Majesty, the divisions in the Councils of the Republic, and represents the sentiments of the States to be unanimous on this occasion. Fortunately Sir Joseph Yorke enables me to convey to her more accurate information, and, as I am certain she will never connect herself with the minority of the provinces, I am not without hopes she will not admit them to become a member of her favourite Confederacy, unless all the seven agree in their opinion.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT M. KEITH, VIENNA.

Petersburg, Nov. 29th, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR,—The Emperor's visits must leave behind them pleasing impressions wherever he goes, and I wish we could receive him in England, either as the bearer of the olive branch, or the forerunner of it. You

* To admit the Dutch to the Convention.

were fully acquainted by me at the time, how completely in every point His Imperial Majesty met the Empress of Russia's ideas, esteem, and approbation. These favourable sentiments were, I am satisfied, too deeply rooted to be effaced, even if he had not been most attentive since his departure to keep them up; but his conduct and the repeated marks of regard he has shewn, have fixed him in her mind for ever. I will be responsible she never was so blindly influenced by the King of Prussia, as at this moment she is, from reason and conviction, warmly attached to Count Falkenstein. He has neglected no opportunity of pleasing her; and, predisposed as she was, every step he has taken has pleased her; this is the more to be admired, as every means human cunning could devise has been employed to stagger her in her predilection. Prussian agents have stretched their inventive faculties to the whole of their bent. They began by propagating here a conversation held by the Emperor immediately on his return to Vienna, highly injurious to the Sovereign he had just left; they mixed in it every remark and witticism they imagined the best calculated to hurt her, and they had the infamy to say, that Count Falkenstein had entered into engagements with the Young Court highly to her disadvantage. However strange it may appear, though I can assure you of its veracity, these reports were strongly supported, underhand, by the French party; and though Mons. de Verac owes a great deal to the unbounded confidence Count Cobenzel (I suppose by order from his Court) seems to place in him, yet he, and his adherents see, with the greatest uneasiness and jealousy, the rise of Austrian interests here. Theirs depends entirely on the permanency of that of Prussia; of course whatever contributes to diminish this, must affect them deeply. In a

word, the Prussian and French Ministers act as much in concert as if the first was included in the Pacte de Famille; they have one common cause, one common interest to support; and I believe neither of them takes any essential step without previously consulting the other. Count Panin is their common protector, and is not less averse to Austrian than to English. My worthy colleague and friend Cobenzel will certainly soon find out this, and the conviction, when it arises from experience, will be more lasting and stronger than if he owed it simply to my forewarning. He may be ever sure of my living with him on the most perfect footing of cordiality and confidence, as well from his personal character, as from the full persuasion I am under that our interests here are the same; that we ought to pursue the same line of conduct, and that if we do not do it, one of us must be in the wrong, and essentially hurt, in time, the service of our Master. I know no event in my political line, which would make me so happy as to be in any shape instrumental to the formation of a triple Alliance between the two Imperial Courts and ours,—till this takes place, I confess I never shall think the liberties of Europe secure, or that a solid peace can ever be made.

Having said thus much of the situation of this Court as far as it relates to yours, I will now say a few words how it stands as to other powers of Europe.

The Empress is, in her private opinion, strongly attached to us; so is Prince Potemkin; but every other member of her Council, every individual of her society, are carried away in that vortex of intrigue and prejudice which seems to have drawn into its circle nearly all Europe. Some few are French from principle, some from education and from levity of mind, others from rancour and animosity, and some from corruption. These all

hold out the necessity of humbling us; that we are too great, too enterprising; that we are sea-tyrants, &c. The absurdity of our being all this, when we are with difficulty defending ourselves against *half Europe and America*, is self-evident; but it gets to the Empress's ear, so compounded with flattery and compliment, so falsified by sophisms and untruths, that, though I am sure it does not persuade, yet it creates doubts in her mind.

I still think we have nothing to fear; she never will be our open enemy, and I am certain that, against all the rest of Europe, we can maintain our ground,—nay, even revenge the injuries offered us. The late event discovered amongst Laurens's papers gives a new turn to our affairs with Holland; its issue will, ere this, be decided, and we shall probably cut this Convention up by the roots, by taking from the Dutch their title of Neutrals. They are ungrateful, dirty, senseless boors; and, since they will be ruined, must submit to their fate. I am sorry for the Stadtholder, and for the House of Orange. If you could prevail on your Court to instruct Cobenzel to assist me with half the zeal and activity I wish and do, though unknown to him, assist him, we soon should get right.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.
(Most secret, in Cipher.)

Petersburg, Tuesday, 24th Nov., 5th Dec., 1780.

PRINCE POTEMKIN, though he did not directly say so, yet clearly gave me to understand, that *the only cession* which would induce the Empress to become our Ally, was that of MINORCA.*

* Lord Stormont in a despatch, dated October 28th, 1780, directs Sir James Harris to discover whether we can hold out to Her Imperial Majesty "some object worthy of her ambition, some cession of a nature to increase

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 1st, 11th Dec., 1780.

THE Empress received the first news of Count Bernsdorff's retreat by the common post.*

She saw from the Inspection of our Letters, that it was supposed it had been produced in deference to her sentiments. She has very severely reprimanded Count Panin for having presumed to make use of her name without her authority; I do not, however, believe this reprimand will have any consequences.

The Danish Chargé des Affaires here, I am convinced, has served him and the Prussian party to the utmost of his power, and I believe he has been seduced either by some actual pecuniary gratification, or at least by promises of a similar nature. It is easily guessed how great a matter of triumph it affords to my opponents. They seem now persuaded that the whole north will soon fall upon us. The King of Prussia would certainly effect this step if he were able.

The stroke His Prussian Majesty has given to our interests at Copenhagen, his offer of a loan to fit out their fleet, the manner in which this equipment with its augmentation was ordered, leave me no doubt that he expects to recover his interest here, by seconding, with all his weight and ability, a project which he thinks is the favourite idea of the Empress.

her commerce and naval strength, and that would engage the Empress to conclude with His Majesty an alliance, making the present war, the Casus Fœderis, and assisting us totis viribus against France and Spain, and our revolted colonies." These two despatches crossed each other on the road, and Sir J. Harris had anticipated his wishes.

* The Prime Minister at Copenhagen, Count Bernsdorff, was opposed to the Convention, and favourable to British interests.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT M. KEITH, VIENNA.

Petersburg, 3rd, 14th Dec., 1780.

I AM glad to have an opportunity to add a few lines by Prince Volkonski to what I wrote yesterday. The extraordinary and universal sensation shewn here, on the news of the death of the Empress Queen,* will better paint the sentiments and disposition of Her Imperial Majesty than anything I can say.

The unfortunate event which occasions his being sent has made so deep an impression on no one as on Count Goertz; he continues thunderstruck, and Cobenzel himself, though from different motives, does not appear less afflicted. The Frenchman is, I believe, not without his share of concern, and, if he partakes of the two others, he grieves both as a son-in-law and as a politician. The Dutch courier is not yet returned; I hope we shall be before-hand with them, and put it out of their power to join any Neutral League. In the hostile one they never can do us so much harm, nor, when our open enemies, hurt us so much as while they have been our false friends.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 8th, 19th Dec., 1780.

IN my last I mentioned to your Lordship the return of the Dutch courier; that he brought full powers to the commissioners to sign the Neutrality as proposed by this Court. These full powers, which though the resolution was agreed to only, according to their own report, by five of the provinces, are in the name of the States-

* The Empress Maria Terese

General; and, in addition to these, is a most flattering letter addressed to the Empress from the Republic. I understand, as soon as everything is agreed on, they are to produce credentials as Ambassadors, and to sign the Convention under this title. I am told also, that this matter once ended, they are instructed to propose a Treaty of Commerce, and that they are authorized to conclude it on terms highly advantageous to Russia. They, both of them, particularly Starenberg, have been constantly in conference with the Russian Minister, and have found in him more facility and zeal, than they could even have hoped for. He has assured them complete success in everything, and, to procure it them as expeditiously as possible, he has assumed an activity I never knew belong to him before. He has deprived himself of the pleasure of society, and has borrowed many hours from his sleep, in order to get his papers in readiness to present to the Empress; for he intends to subjoin to the memorial they give in, one of his own, in which he urges his Sovereign to lose no time in forming this connexion, which he represents to her as the most salutary to her empire, and most conducive to her glory. Whether he will be ready before the departure of the post, I cannot say; at latest, however, Her Imperial Majesty will receive it to-morrow.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 13th, 24th Dec., 1780.

I AM well aware, it will appear, I have detained the messenger along while, but it was not in my power to obey the instructions he brought when and how I would.

It would be making a very ill use of your Lordship's time, to lead you through a minute detail of every step I have taken during the last four months, a period in which I have had several conferences with Count Panin, and regular daily ones with Prince Potemkin. In conversing with them I never lost sight of that great point of my instructions, and on which your Lordship, with so much reason, lays such stress, that of discovering the *real sentiments* of this Court; if, as they appear to be, they were actually inimical, or whether that appearance was not given them by the ready invention of our enemies, and by the address they have had in converting to their party almost every person of weight in the State.

The Dutch will be admitted to the Neutral League; the Plenipotentiaries are become Ambassadors; and, dazzled with the idea of Russian protection, it is probable Holland will now hasten to its own destruction, for I am certain it has already received the only favour it will ever obtain here, and that the Empress never will support the Dutch in any of their excesses.

Prince Potemkin who, as I before mentioned, was fully convinced of the truth of what I said, did everything in his power to persuade her to see me in private, and was astonished at the unaccountable resistance he met in her, and which he never before had experienced. He imputed it in part to the idea his enemies had fixed in her mind, that he was aspiring at unlimited power; to the imbecility of the favourite, who was an idle talebearer, and particularly to the adroit flattery of Count Falkenstein, who, though certainly he meant him no harm, had essentially hurt him by teaching her to believe that she was the greatest Princess in Europe, and that she wanted neither Ministers nor favorite to direct

her Councils: he added, that this language would at any time have turned her head, but that she was within these two years so greatly sunk, her intellects so weakened, and her passions so increased, that it now operated with redoubled force. "Sometimes," said he, "when I speak on Foreign Affairs, she lets me remain without any answer at all, and at others replies to me with warmth and displeasure."

On Monday, the 7th, 18th, he sent for me in the morning, and communicated to me a note he had written to the Empress, with her answer. His note was short. It set forth his zeal for her service, his concern for the situation in which persons less zealous than himself for her glory had placed her, and requested if she had doubts of what he said, that she would be pleased to perform the promise she had so long ago given him, of seeing me in private. Her answer was equally short; she consented to see me, but first desired to see him. He accordingly went down to her, and remained upwards of two hours alone with her. I had with impatience waited his return, and was happy to see him come in with a countenance full of satisfaction and joy. He began by telling me, Her Imperial Majesty would see me at ten the next morning; that she heard him with particular attention and pleasure, and that he evidently saw she was coming round.

He told me to be unreserved, open and candid; "for," said he, "she has excessive penetration, and if she perceives any inconsistency or prevarication she will suspect your sincerity; let her feel that you use no other weapons than those of truth and justice, and that you argue from these principles, and from the love of your country. Flatter as much as you can; *you cannot use too much unction;* but flatter her for what she *ought to be*, not

for *what she is.* Do not expect that you can break off the Dutch negotiation, or that it is in the power of any person living to prevent her concluding her favourite plan of Armed Neutrality. Content yourself with destroying its effects; the resolution itself is immovable. As it was conceived by mistake, perfected by vanity, it is maintained by pride and obstinacy; you well know the hold of these passions *on a female mind,* and if you attempt to slacken you will only tighten the knot. Let me repeat to you," said he, "Be open and unreserved; make her feel you have full confidence in her; it is because she supposes your nation has not this confidence, that she is displeased."

At half-past ten one of Her Imperial Majesty's valets de chambre came to fetch me, and I was carried through a back door into her private apartment, where the following conversation passed. I set it down in French by question and answer, as I cannot so well convey to your Lordship in any other way the Empress's character and sentiments as from her own words, and that they are her own words, I can safely protest, since they made too deep an impression on me ever to be forgotten:—

H.—Je viens pour représenter à Votre Majesté Impériale la situation critique dans laquelle nos affaires se trouvent. Elle connoit notre confiance en elle; nous osons nous flatter qu'elle détournera l'orage, qu'elle nous rassurera sur nos craintes d'avoir perdu son amitié.

I.—Vous connoissez, Monsieur, mes sentimens pour votre nation; ils sont aussi sincères qu'invariables, mais j'ai rencontré si peu de retour de votre part, que je sens que je ne devrois plus vous compter parmi mes amis.

H.—C'est dans l'espérance ou j'étois que ces sentimens n'étoient pas entièrement effacés, que je désirois m'adresser directement à elle, mais ce n'étoit pas sans crainte

que je l'approchois, les apparences n'annoncoient que trop les impressions qu'elle avoit reçu de nos ennemis.

I.—En quoi, et comment ?

H.—Partout, Madame, en Hollande, en Dannemarc, en Prusse. Si Votre Majesté Impériale a jeté les yeux sur la note que j'ai remise au Prince Potemkin, elle auroit vu sur quoi mes craintes sont fondées.

I.—Je l'ai lue ; je vous répète, Monsieur, que j'aime votre nation ; c'est une foiblesse de croire à tous les commerages que les petits Politiques répandent.

H.—Nos ennemis sont parvenus à tourner toutes les opérations de Votre Majesté Impériale si fort à leur avantage, qu' à l'heure qu'il est on croit à Londres, qu'elle est secrètement en intelligence avec la France ; qu'elle s'entend avec la maison de Bourbon, pour décider du sort de la guerre.

I.—(avec une extrême vivacité) Je vous donne ma parole d'Impératrice, que non je n'ai jamais eu de l'inclination pour les François ; je n'en aurai jamais ; cependant je dois avouer qu'ils ont eu à mon égard des attentions bien plus marquées que vous autres.

H.—Ils n'ont eu, Madame, que leurs intérêts en vue ; leur politesse est toujours suspecte. Elle ne comparera certainement pas la facilité qu'elle a trouvé chez nos ennemis à déférer à son projet de Neutralité armée, à toutes les preuves d'amitié non équivoques qu'elle a reçu de nous dans sa guerre avec la Porte ; et pourroit-elle jamais espérer dane un cas pareil, cet empressement à la soutenir que nous avons témoigné, quand sa flotte est entrée et qu'elle est sortie de la Mediterranée.

I.—Je les reconnois, Monsieur, ces services. Je ne les oublierai jamais, à moins que vous ne m'y forciez ; mais que voulez vous que je fasse pour vous ? vous ne voulez pas faire la Paix.

H.—Nous ne désirons rien tant ; mais nous ne sommes pas les agresseurs, et nous sommes sans amis.

I.—C'est que vous ne voulez pas en avoir, Monsieur, vous êtes si *roides*, si *réservés;* vous n'avez point de confiance en moi.

H.—Je suis au désespoir de voir que l'effet des intrigues, qui n'ont que trop réussi en Europe, aient porté sur un esprit aussi éclairé que celui de Votre Majesté Impériale ; je n'avois que trop raison de la croire prévenue contre nous.

I.—Je parle d'après des faits; les faux bruits ne me font rien ; je suis au dessus des préventions, mais toute votre conduite a été dure vis-à-vis de moi ; je vous avoue, cela m'a été fort sensible, car j'aime votre nation comme la mienne.

H.—Sauvez donc, Madame, la nation que vous aimez; elle a recours à vous.

I.—Mettez moi à même de la faire ; je n'hésiterai pas un moment ; dites moi sur quel pied vous désirez faire la paix. Que votre Cour s'ouvre à moi ; elle devroit me connoître mieux qu'elle ne fait.

H.—Exigez de nous ce que vous voulez ; nous ne saurions rien refuser à Votre Majesté Impériale, si nous savions ce qui pourroit l'obliger.

I.—Que voulez vous que je vous dise, avant que je sois instruite des sentimens de votre Cour ?

H.—Nous ne pouvons prétendre à moins que le renouvellement de la paix de Paris de 1762.

I.—Vous faites bien d'y prétendre, si vous êtes en force de la soutenir.

H.—Ne sommes nous pas en droit ? n'est elle pas de nos amis ? que feroit-elle à notre place ?

I.—Quand je saurai vos sentimens, je vous le dirai.

H.—Daignez nous donner des conseils.

I.—Quand vous me parlerez clairement.

H.—J'ose assurer Votre Majesté Impériale que nous avons une confiance aveugle en elle.

I.—Témoignez la autrement que par des paroles ; vous verrez alors combien je serai de vos amis ; vous ne faites que me rebuter. Comment voulez vous que je vous veuille du bien ?

H.—Votre Majesté Impériale ne diroit pas ainsi, si notre conduite lui avoit été réprésentée dans son vrai jour, et si on ne lui avoit pas rendu nos sentimens bien différens de ce qu'ils sont.

I.—Qui a pu les changer ? qui auroit osé me tromper ?

H.—*Votre Premier Ministre*, Madame, *le Comte Panin ;* il est le plus dangereux de nos ennemis.

I.—(avec chaleur) Il cessera d'être mon Ministre des l'instant qu'il me trompe.

H.—Il paroit evident qu'il cherche à le faire ; qu'il a juré de semer la discorde entre les deux nations ; et mené entièrement pas les intrigues de Potzdam, il ne vise à d'autre but qu'a lier Votre Majesté Impériale avec la France, et pour l'effectuer, *il est déjà lui-même dans une intelligence parfaite avec le Ministre de Versailles.*

I.—(piquée) Ne croyez pas que cela signifie quelque chose ; je connois à foud Mons. Panin ; ses intrigues ne font plus rien sur moi ; je ne suis pas un enfant ; personne ne m'empêche de faire ce que je veux ; je vois clair.

H.—Votre Majesté Impériale ne sauroit voir ce qui ne se passe pas chez elle ; le Comte Panin prône le parti François partout ; il l'appuye et le soutient ; il est entièrement dévoué au Roi de Prusse, et le sert plutôt que Votre Majesté. Il l'a invité d'accéder à la Neutralité armée.

I.—(avec hauteur) Je serai bien aise qu'il accède, moi ; je soutiendrai mon projet ; je le crois salutaire.

H.—On dit, Madame (mais je crains de l'offenser), que c'est le projet des François, et que le votre étoit très différent.

I.—(avec violence) Mensonge atroce! vous devez savoir que je puis rendre politesse pour politesse, mais je n'aurai jamais de la confiance en eux. Mais quel mal vous fait cette Neutralité armée, ou plutôt *Nullité armée?*

H.—Tout le mal possible; elle établit de nouvelles loix, qui mettent à couvert le commerce de nos ennemis en exposant le notre; elle leur laisse leurs vaisseaux marchands pour le transport des troupes, et leur fournit de quoi construire des vaisseaux de guerre; elle sert encore à confondre nos amis avec nos ennemis, et on l'emploie encore à des projets bien éloignés de celui auquel elle doit sa naissance.

I.—Vous molestez mon commerce; vous arrêtez mes vaisseaux; j'attache à cela un intérêt particulier; c'est mon enfant que mon commerce, et vous ne voulez pas que je me fâche?

H.—J'ose dire, Madame, que Votre Majesté Impériale a encore été trompée la dessus. Qu'elle daigne se rappeller les résponses que nous avons faites à tout ce qu'elle nous a dit à cet égard; qu'elle réfléchisse sur le pas que nous venons de faire, en insérant les articles 10 et 11 de son Traité de 1766 dans nos lettres de marque.

I.—Permettez moi d'observer, que la nation que j'aime le plus, et de qui je croyois être le plus aimée, a été la dernière à avoir cette complaisance pour moi. Ne parlons plus la dessus, nous nous brouillerions. Mais écoutez ce que je vais vous dire. Faites la paix; le moment en est venu; ouvrez vous à moi avec une entière confiance; je suis amie de l'Angleterre d'inclination ainsi que d'intérêt. Ces sentimens assurent ma façon de me conduire: ne me cachez rien; je vous passe ma parole

d'Impératrice de ne vous pas compromettre. Je désire ardemment vous tirer d'embarras, mais prêtez vous y vous-même : soyez plus souple, moins reservé ; rendez justice à vos amis, et Dieu veuille que cette conversation entre Cathérine II. et Mons. Harris, bon Anglais, et honnête homme, conduise au but que nous désirons ; qu'elle devienne époque dans l'histoire. Je vous le répète, point de méfiance ; point de roideur, je ne reponds alors plus de rien ; mais soyez ouverts, clairs, et francs, je répondrai alors de tout.

H.—La manière dont Votre Majesté Impériale vient de s'exprimer me touche ; elle mérite et elle a notre entière confiance ; nous n'avons jamais cessé d'en avoir en elle, mais nous avons toujours craint de nous fier à son Ministre, que j'ai cru de mon devoir de rèprésenter à ma Cour tel qu'il est ; et Votre Majesté Impériale voudra bien me permettre d'observer, que si je dois m'expliquer avec lui, il me trahira, ou ne vous rendra que très imparfaitement ce que je lui aurai dit.

I.—Ne lui donnez rien que par écrit ; il ne pourra alors rien changer ; s'il me cache la vérité, *je le chasse.*

H.—Je sais d'avance que rien moins que la paix de Paris, renouvellée en entier, peut nous satisfaire.

I.—(avec finesse) Je ne dis rien ; parlez moi franchement de chez vous ; désabusez moi de cette réserve, de cette méfiance que je crois appercevoir dans votre Ministère ; je vous dirai tout alors.

H.—En admettant ce que dit Votre Majesté Impériale cette méfiance ne seroit que prudence, dès qu'elle nait de l'idée que Votre Majesté Impériale est dans les intérêts de nos ennemis ; qu'elle a de l'éloignement pour nous.

I.—(avec chaleur) Moi, de l'éloignement pour vous, quelle idée !

H.—Si nos actions sont mal rendues à Votre Majesté

Impériale les siennes ne sont pas plus fidèlement rapportées à ma Cour. L'Europe entière est menée par une cabale ; en Hollande on assure que Votre Majesté Impériale protège la faction Gallo-Américaine, en Dannemarc son nom a chassé le premier Ministre ; et les Rois de Prusse et de France l'emploient à leur fantaisie partout.

I.—Commerage, vous dis-je encore ; c'est une imbécilité d'ajouter foi à de pareilles absurdités ; mettez moi à même par votre conduite de leur donner le démenti, je le ferois demain ; soyez mon ami, autant que je désire que vous le soyez. Je crois que vous avez encore des amis en Hollande, qu'ils ne permettent pas à la ville d'Amsterdam de plonger la République dans une guerre ; et c'est une fausseté abominable de dire, que j'ai contribué à faire chasser Bernsdorff ; c'étoit un honnête homme, un ministre intègre ; mais faites la paix, je vous l'ai si souvent dit.

H.—Si Votre Majesté Impériale me l'avoit si souvent dit, je l'aurois certainement rapporté à ma Cour.

I.—J'ai cependant bien ordonné à Mons. Panin de vous en parler.

H.—Il m'a bien tenu quelques propos vagues relatifs à une pacification, mais pas au nom de Votre Majesté Impériale, et j'avoue que tout ce qui venoit de lui seul m'a toujours paru suspect.

I.—Vous l'entendez du moins de ma part à présent ; faites la paix ; traitez avec vos Colonies en détail ; tâchez de les désunir ; leur alliance avec les François tombe alors d'elle-même, et cela leur servira *d'échappatoire*, car il faut penser aussi, que chaque puissance voudroit sauver son honneur.

H.—Mais les François ont lésé notre honneur ; faut-il que nous pensions au leur ?

I.—Quand on veut faire la paix, on commence par

oublier le mal qu'on s'est fait réciproquement ; mais, je le répète, votre ministère est dans la plus grande erreur de me croire changeé ; il m'a révolté, il m'a empêché de témoigner à votre nation ma bonne volonté ; je l'ai trouvé en opposition à moi partout ; c'est dans sa conduite, pas dans la mienne, qu'il faut chercher le mal passé, et le remède futur. Je vous réponds de mon amitié, de ma justice, je suis charmée que vous ayez témoigné une envie de me voir, j'ai voulu vuider mon sac ; je désirois infiniment m'exculper avec vous ; j'ai voulu m'acquitter des derniers devoirs de l'amitié ; si vous n'en profitéz pas, je n'aurai plus rien à me reprocher. Tenez, mon cher Harris, je vous parle très sincèrement, et je prétends que vous fassiez un rapport très sérieux à votre Cour ; si après tout ce que je viens de vous dire, je lui trouve la même *indifférence*, la même *roideur*, que sais-je moi, le même ton de *supériorité* avec moi, je ne me mêle plus de rien ; je laisse aller les affaires leur train, et vous vous trouverez alors dans cette position où vous croyez être déjà, mais d'où cependant vous êtes bien éloignés, en autant que cela dépend de moi, et vous pensez bien qu'il dépend uniquement de moi. En vous disant cela, je vous parle comme je n'ai parlé à personne ; je croirois me compromettre vis-à-vis de tout autre ; mais je vous veux du bien ; profitez en, Monsieur Harris ; rapportez fidèlement tout ce que je vous ai dit ; j'attends avec impatience le retour de votre courier ; mais je vous avoue, si je dois juger de l'avenir par le passé, je n'espère rien, je désespère même ; vous continuerez à roidir, vous n'ajouterez pas foi à ce que je dis ; vous indisposerez vos amis, vous augmenterez vos ennemis, et j'aurai le chagrin de voir vos difficultés sans pouvoir les diminuer.

II.—Votre Majesté Impériale à l'âme trop élevée pour jamais nous abandonner. Elle ne voudra jamais que la

postérité dise, que de son règne, l'Angleterre a pensé succomber, sans qu'elle ait tendue la main pour la secourir.

I.—Je suis lasse d'être généreuse ; faut-il toujours l'être sans que l'on le soit pour moi ? Soyez le à mon égard, vous verrez comme je le serai au votre ; laissez mon commerce en repos ; n'arrêtez pas le peu de vaisseaux que j'ai; je vous dis qu'ils sont mes enfans; je voudrois que mon peuple devint industrieux ; est ce dans le caractère d'une nation philosophe de s'y opposer ?

H.—Nous ferons tout pour vos vaisseaux. Mais Votre Majesté Impériale ne prétend surement pas par cette Neutralité Armée, que toute nation jouisse du même droit ?

I.—Je vous dis que c'est une *Nullité Armée*, mais je la soutiendrai toujours ; rendez la plus nulle encore en faisant la paix ; proposez moi vos conditions.

H.—Certainement, Madame, nous ne pourrons jamais accepter de moins favorables que celles comprises dans le Traité de Paix de Paris ; et je ne saurai croire que Votre Majesté Impériale approuve que nous rabattions aucune de ces prétensions.

I.—Quand vous me les présenterez de la part de votre Cour, nous verrons ; et j'atteste le Ciel que je désire que cette entrevue, dans laquelle (en riant) nous ne nous sommes pas mal expliqués, ait toutes les suites que je désire ; je voudrois dire que j'espère.

H.—Cette entrevue est bien flatteuse pour moi ; elle me rassure sur la façon de penser de Votre Majesté Impériale, et je vois qu'elle ne s'est point livrée à nos ennemis.

I.—(avec un air de vérité) Jamais je ne serai de leurs amis ; je ne cesserai jamais d'être des votres, à moins que vous me m'y forciez ; si vous le voulez, je vous servirai

d'inclination et d'intérêt ; avec ces deux motifs on ne fait pas à moitié. Adieu, Monsieur, (en se levant,) n'oubliez pas l'importance de notre conférence.

H.—Avant que Votre Majesté Impériale se retire, qu'elle me permette d'observer, qu'on n'ignorera pas en ville que j'ai été chez elle, et bien qu'on soit accoutumé à ses bontés pour moi, il n'est pas douteux qu'on ne remue ciel et terre pour en deviner l'objet, que peut-être, à peu de chose près, le devinera-t-on, et que certainement on emploiéra tous les moyens que la finesse, le manège, et la calomnie peuvent imaginer, pour nous desservir dans son esprit. J'ose donc la supplier de regarder tout ce qui se passera entre le départ et le retour de mon courier comme non avenu.

I.—Que vous me connoissez mal ! suis-je un enfant ? n'ai-je pas assez dit ? faut-il ajouter que je désire autant que vous que vous me mettiez à même de vous servir.

H.—Quelle perspective agréable Votre Majesté Impériale me fait entrevoir ! Il me paroit que je vois le moment approcher, quand les deux Cours s'entendront, et que Votre Majesté Impériale ajoutera un trouveau lustre à son règne, en donnant à son empire l'alliée la plus naturelle et la plus utile.

I.—Je le désire ardemment; j'y contribuerai de mon mieux ; faites un pas de votre côté. Pour une femme, c'est peu exiger. Mais, je vous parle très sérieusement, Monsieur Harris, faites envisager à votre Cour, qu'il y va du tout. Surtout, qu'elle ait de la confiance en moi. Je veux qu'on se fie à moi ; je n'en abuse jamais ; cependant, je prévois qu'il n'en sera rien, et que je fais inutilement ce dernier effort en votre faveur. Adieu, Monsieur.

H.—Je dois informer Votre Majesté Impériale qu'en vertu de ses instances, Le Roi, mon Maître, a décoré Mr. Wroughton de l'ordre du Bain, et que Sa Majesté a

toujours un plaisir infini en témoignant à Votre Majesté Impériale son désir de lui complaire en tout.

I.—Dites à Sa Majesté que je suis très sensible à cette attention de sa part, et que j'espère trouver en lui la même complaisance dans les affaires plus importantes. Il me trouvera toujours bien reconnoissante.

Thus, my Lord, ended our conversation, which I can venture to say I have set down with the greatest accuracy, as far as relates to the words, sentiments, and manner in which the Empress expressed herself.

I have, indeed, omitted a good deal of what I myself said, for I was much more profuse on the evils which would result to us from the Armed Neutrality, and painted in still stronger colours than will appear from the reading of this dialogue, the advantages our enemies derived by committing everywhere the Empress's name, and by being supported in their intrigues by her Imperial Majesty's minister here. It is sufficient for your Lordship to be fully acquainted with the effects of what I said, and of the free and unreserved declaration the Empress has made of her disposition and sentiments.

As to her Neutral League, she will not give it up. She is too proud to retract; but your Lordship may be satisfied that she now sees herself how unjust its consequences are to others, and the inconveniences it may bring on herself; that she only wishes to find a pretext to destroy its effects, and, from a weakness in her character, this is the first wish in her mind, at the very moment when the Dutch Plenipotentiaries are signing. On this point we must humour her. Our arguments, though the best human reason ever used, will avail nothing: we must condescend to flatter her, to grant a free passage to her ships, to make an exception in her favour. She then immediately, and before any advantage will arise to her

trade from this act of complaisance, will become our warm and zealous friend; and, if the conditions on which the last peace of Paris in 1762 was made, are such as may suit Her Majesty's approbation, I am positive will support us in insisting on them, and become, in support of these terms, a willing Mediatrix. If what I was writing was my own opinion solely, and if it arose from no other circumstance but from the conversation I have just related (however explicit this may have been), I should not dare to assert thus positively what I say; but I am confirmed in it by Prince Potemkin, who knows too well Her Imperial Majesty to be mistaken in her character.

"Let them reflect on the *character* and *sex* of the person to whom they are speaking; let them consider that there is no disgrace to indulge a weakness, from which they may draw the greatest advantages; let them imitate what first the King of Prussia has done, and since the Emperor; let them talk to her *passions*, to her *feelings;* she from that moment becomes your lasting and most active friend. But supposing," said he, "even this should not be so, where is the evil of speaking out? Your secret will not be betrayed, and the terms you propose will be such as will do you honour in Europe. For God's sake do not be ashamed to flatter her; it is the only road to her good-will, and she has so high an opinion of your nation, that a pleasant word from you will go further than a studied phrase from any other people. She asks for nothing but praise and compliment; give her that, and she in return will give you the whole force of her Empire." These, my Lord, are the Prince's own words, and they contain the *whole secret* of this Court.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, Sunday, 13th, 24th December, 1780.

On the first favourable opportunity after the reception of your Lordship's despatch,* I led Prince Potemkin unaffectedly to talk on the remote prospect there was of peace. I observed that, from the language of Count Panin (as related in mine Nov. 3), I saw we had nothing to hope here; and that, abandoned by all our friends, we could only rely on the justice of our cause, and on such resources as our own internal strength supplied us with;—that these, however, were not inexhaustible, and that, if the infection of the French cabal spread, as it appeared to me to do throughout all Europe, I could not venture to hope that we ever should put an end to the war without some diminution, either of our power or of our possessions;—that when this should take place, and, according to all human calculation take place it would, our natural friends would then see their error, and, when it was too late, lament their having been the cause of giving additional weight to Courts in interests opposite to theirs;—that the diminution of our national preponderance would not be less felt by them than by us, and that they would very soon perceive the use France would make of an increase of power. He asked why I was repeating what I had so often said, and whether I thought any doubts remained on his mind of the crisis in which we were, and of the erroneous conduct of this and of several other courts who ought to be our friends.

I told him, certainly not; that it arose from my having been adverting to all the possible means of preventing this evil, and that, though it was only an idea of my own,

* This despatch is alluded to in a note, page 345.

it suggested itself to me, whether, if we were ever reduced to the disagreeable necessity of making cessions, it would not be wiser for us, as well for our own good, as for the sake of the balance of Europe in general, to make them to our natural *friends*, rather than to our natural *enemies*;—that perhaps such an act might rouse them to activity, and end the contest by rendering it more equal.

Prince Potemkin caught with eagerness at the idea. "What can you cede to us?" said he. I told him we had extensive possessions in America, in the East Indies, on the Sugar Islands; perhaps some of these might please the Empress; and, though I had not the smallest right to dispose of them, or even a shadow of authority for what I was saying, yet, in my own private opinion, we ought to gratify her with such part of them as she chose, if by it we could obtain a lasting peace. I said such as she chose, because I was sure she would be moderate, and because, in my own mind, such a cession would only be an exchange of masters, and that the utility and advantage of the possessions would, when it was in the hands of the Empress, still remain to the English.

He shook his head at all this. "You would ruin us if you give us distant colonies; you see our ships can scarce get out of the Baltic, how would you have them cross the Atlantic? If you give us anything, give us something *nearer home*."

I told him we could not dismember our own Island, and that we set an immense value on our Mediterranean possessions.

"I am sorry for it," added he; "for if you would cede *Minorca*, I promise you, *I believe I could lead the Empress any lengths*."

I told him I had no authority to say we would cede

anything, but that I believed the cession he required, impossible.

"So much the worse," replied the Prince; "it would insure us to you for ever."

The next day, and several days after, he always got on this subject, and I found it had made a very strong impression on his mind. I, however, affected not to encourage him to talk on it, and generally turned the conversation on other subjects. About a fortnight ago, just before the news of the Empress Queen's death came here, we were sitting alone together very late in the evening, when he broke out of a sudden, into all the advantages that would arise to Russia from a possession in the Mediterranean; that we ought to wish it, because it would be a perpetual source of enmity with France, and that we should never suffer by it, since, for every possible political use, it would be as much ours as theirs. He then, with the liveliness of his imagination, ran on the idea of a Russian fleet stationed at Mahon, of its peopling the island with Greeks; that such an acquisition would be a column of the Empress's glory erected in the middle of the sea, and that he would be responsible he could lead her to any lengths under the promise of such a cession.

I told him what I had said before, that the idea of any cession at all, was purely my own; that I was happy it had given him some pleasing reflections, but that these were but reveries, since I was perfectly ignorant of the sentiments of my Court on this subject.

"Find them out," added he with eagerness, "as soon as you can; persuade your Ministers to give it us, and we will give you peace, and then unite ourselves to you by the firmest and most lasting alliance."

I told him I was most ready to communicate everything which he desired; but he would recollect he gave me a very delicate commission, and that he must be conscious it was not permitted for one in my situation, to do more than report facts; that we could not take upon us to be counsellors or advisers.

He said, "surely they can't blame you for giving good advice; they want our friendship; purchase it, by less, perhaps, than what you will be obliged to bestow on your enemies at the conclusion of the war."

I replied, since he desired me, I would not refuse him, and, when I could despatch my courier, would make a faithful report of what he said; but that, if he wished to have a speedy answer, he must procure me a speedy interview with the Empress, since I never could take upon me to send away a messenger, till I had something more certain, and more satisfactory to write.

I told him he must promise this whole matter should remain a profound secret; that it should, if it ever came in agitation, pass through his hands alone, or directly between me and the Empress, and that neither Count Panin nor any other of her secretaries or ministers should be employed on this occasion. He very readily assented to this, and I am certain will keep his promise.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, Sunday, 13th, 24th Dec., 1780.

Your Lordship, from my other letters of this date, will have received full information as to the present temper and situation of this Court. What I advance comes from

the highest authority. I cannot mislead your Lordship, unless a great Sovereign has so far forgot her character as to mislead me. Her expressions admit of no doubt, and I must have reported them very inaccurately if they do not strike your Lordship in the same forcible manner they did me. I think it, however, my duty to explain still further, and more fully, the sense I am convinced they were intended to convey. I speak not only from such experience as may arise from a three years' residence at this Court during a very bustling period, but from the information I have obtained by a long, intimate, and confidential intercourse with Prince Potemkin. I give his sentiments and opinion as well as my own, and your Lordship may be satisfied he never yet mistook those of the Empress; that his penetration and acuteness are most extraordinary, and that he cannot have the most distant view of deceiving me, for his private interest and reputation are, from the avowed part he has taken in my favour, so intimately connected with my success, that we must necessarily fall or rise together.

The most notorious falsehoods have been made use of to describe us as being cold, reserved, haughty, and supercilious. No one can better know than myself that we have been the reverse of all this; but the error is deeply rooted in her mind, and we must combat it, not with the weapons of reason and good sense, but with those the *wise* ever employ against the *weak*. We must humour her, give into her failings, and by seeming to respect, make them instruments to bring forth those virtues they now conceal. The time is, I am bold to say, come, when this may be effected, when all her prejudices may be removed, and when she may be restored to her former opinions.

The whole tenour of her conversation with me implied what I say. It was strongly expressive of her desire to become our friend, and she pointed out herself that her friendship was to be purchased by confidence, complaisance, and by assurances of reciprocal regard; that if we offered her these in the manner she liked, she would be bound to us for ever, but if we refused them her, that then she would persist, and complete her present obnoxious system.

Your Lordship will permit me to observe, though the offer of Minorca is to be kept apart from the proposal of a mediation, and is to be considered as the price of a future alliance, yet that it is on that the whole depends. If the giving this up should not be judged expedient, the rest falls to the ground; but, if His Majesty, in his wisdom, sees greater advantages in changing the present system of Europe, and in making himself a great and powerful ally, than in the possession of this Island: and guaranteeing it to the Empress, would, I am certain, produce this effect; it would make us indispensably necessary to her, and be a constant object of discord and jealousy between Russia and France. I need not observe that this must be a distinct and most secret negotiation, and must be of course managed so as to make the most of the bargain, and according to the instructions and directions I receive from your Lordship.

Having done already so much in favour of her ships, we should go a step further and give her the most convincing, and, at the same time, the most captivating proof of our attention to oblige her, by saying, we will let *all* Russian vessels pass by untouched. I do not mean that this immunity should be granted them by a *public* declaration, or that it should be made a fixed and permanent right, but that *secret* injunctions should be given to

our privateers, and these injunctions communicated to her in a note drawn up at home. The grace with which the thing is done, will have more effect than the thing itself.

I mention the communication should be through a note from home, since, amongst other strange notions given the Empress, she is taught to believe, that whenever I say anything amicable or cordial, it comes purely from myself, and not from orders; for this reason, on this point, and indeed on any other, except that of Minorca, I should wish to have the papers I am to present finished, and sent me from home.

But to return; an act of this kind would sooner destroy the Neutral League than anything else; she already begins to be tired of it, and to see its dangerous tendency. When your Lordship considers that the Dutch, perhaps, will have ceased to be a Neutral power before this reaches you, and that, at all events, they never can put themselves in the same predicament as Russia; that the Danes are already tied up by a subsequent engagement with us, and that, by granting this apparent privilege to the Empress, we, in fact, can offend none but the Swedes, who already are in avowed connexion with France; I say, when your Lordship considers this, and when you advert to the impossibility of this people ever becoming navigators, at least on their northern coasts, I flatter myself you will approve this measure, which, had it been adopted in the beginning, would I certainly believe, then have cut up by the roots the Armed Neutrality.

I feel my zeal for His Majesty's service may make me impertinent; but I must add, that on proposing to Her Imperial Majesty the terms of the Peace of Paris as the basis of a pacification, we must not in speaking to her, be silent on America. I by no means understand that a

conciliation with that country should be brought about by the intervention of any foreign power whatsoever; I well know how repugnant such an idea is to His Majesty's fixed resolution; but we must tell her what we have done, what we are doing, thank her for the advice she has been pleased to give, when she recommended to us to separate the Colonies, and treat with them separately, and ask her counsels for the future.

If we do all this, my Lord, and if while we are doing, we never lose sight of the character of the person to whom we are speaking, there is every reason to hope and expect we shall reclaim her entirely, and that a year will not pass over before she will become our firm friend and ally.

The cession of Minorca will be absolutely *conditional*, and, unless the conditions be complied with, the cession will never be made. If, therefore, the resolution is once taken, no evil can arise from the discussion.

I feel, my Lord, this letter stands in need of an apology; that I have assumed in it a character I have no right to; that it does not become me to advise. I said in another place, my whole thoughts were turned towards the promoting my Royal Master's service, and if this does not apologise for the style in which this is written, I have no other excuse to make.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 13th, 24th Dec., 1780.

YOUR Lordship can conceive no idea of the height to which corruption is carried in this country, of the exorbitancy of the demands, or of the barefacedness with which they are made. The French, the Dutch, and even the Prussian Ministers, are most profuse on this article,

and the first, I am certain, has expended (to very little purpose indeed) immense sums since his arrival. He has furnished money to the two first cousins of Count Panin and the Vice-Chancellor, to purchase houses to the amount of four or five thousand pounds each; every subaltern expects his fees, and these fees are according to the exigences of the times. The Duke of Courland spends 20,000*l.* yearly here, and may boast of having amongst his pensioners, Count Panin, Count Czernicheff, Count Ostermann. Your Lordship may be satisfied that I shall be as economical as possible, but I must pay for every piece of intelligence I get, and my informers know how important it is for me to receive it in time and with accuracy.

I submit, my Lord, with cheerfulness to whatever your Lordship may think advantageous for His Majesty's service; I feared, and still fear, that the personal objections the Russian Minister has to me, influence his public conduct and embitter it still more. It was from this motive alone, I submitted it to your Lordship's opinion, whether I had not better be recalled. As long as I enjoy my Royal Master's approbation, and your Lordship's good-will, I am totally indifferent to anything else, and confess I have a secret satisfaction in feeling that the zeal with which I do my duty, does not escape the observation of my enemies.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 29th Dec., 9th Jan., 1780—81.

In my last, I informed your Lordship of the accession of the Dutch to the Neutral League.* Though every

* This Convention was the same as that with the Courts of Denmark and Sweden, except that the Dutch engaged to furnish fifteen ships of the line, instead of ten.—*Harris Papers.*

attempt I made to prevent its taking place has proved abortive, yet I hope it will appear I have not been deficient in the arguments I have used, or neglectful in the means I have employed. The evil was past a cure before my friend thought proper to stir: had he listened to me in the beginning, and served me with that activity, zeal, and warmth, he now shows, the whole would have been then destroyed. I acquainted him in full time of everything that was in meditation. I forewarned him of the Declaration; of the invitation made to the Foreign Courts; of the Convention, and particularly of every stage of the Dutch intrigue, long before it took place.

He might have been prepared to have counteracted them all, but an extreme habitual inattention, and a certain levity, with which he is too apt to treat the most serious concerns, prevented him attending to what I said. He suffered the whole transaction to pass, almost without opposition, and never undertook seriously to attack it, till such time as the Empress was gone too far to retreat.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, Wednesday, 30th Dec., 10th Jan., 1780—81.

My Lord,—I fear my letter will not catch the post time enough for me to inform your Lordship, that late yesterday and after my despatches were sent, an estafette arrived from the Hague, bringing an account of Sir Joseph Yorke having left that place, without taking leave, on the 23rd December, and that orders were likewise sent to Count Welderen* to quit London, and that war was in a manner declared between England and Holland. I can only say to your Lordship, that I know that Prince Gallitzin, who conveys this news, does it in

* Dutch Minister at London.

the most partial and uncandid manner; that he ventures to assert, that the Dutch had given the satisfaction we required, and that *their accession to the Northern League, not their American Treaty*, is the real cause of our conduct. I shall, this morning, endeavour to destroy this unjust and false idea, and, by the next post, speak more fully to your Lordship on this important event, which seems to cause no small fermentation here.

LETTER FROM LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

St. James's, Jan. 20th, 1781.

My Lord,—Prince Potemkin has pointed the views of his Sovereign to a great object indeed, to a most valuable possession which this country was eager to acquire, and has been ever anxious to maintain. Minorca, besides its many real advantages, stands very high in the esteem of the nation at large, a circumstance that must be attended to in a constitution like ours: if ever a minister in this country parts with such a possession, it must be upon grounds that will fully warrant the propriety in the public opinion.

It is true, that there is a most material difference between ceding a valuable possession to an enemy, and yielding it to a neutral friend and ally, as a return for great and essential proofs of friendship, and as a bond of perpetual union; the sacrifice would certainly be a great one, even in that view, but every sacrifice consistent with honour and dignity may have its price. Prince Potemkin saw at once the many advantages that would accrue to Russia from such an acquisition, but he spoke in very loose and general terms of the service the Empress would engage to render this country, yet,

it is very clear, such a sacrifice cannot possibly be made but for great and essential service actually performed. However unusual it may be to go deep into a negotiation of so delicate a nature upon the first general opening, yet every consideration of that sort gives way to the desire of treating with that unreserved confidence which the Empress so much recommends, and which we are persuaded she will ever return.

Upon this principle it is, that the King goes at once to the root of this business, and His Majesty, after taking the opinion of his confidential servants, has empowered me to authorize you to mention the conditions upon which alone so great and important a cession can be made. (You will decipher with the utmost attention what follows.) The Empress of Russia shall effectuate the restoration of peace between Great Britain, France, and Spain, upon the following terms, viz.: The treaty of Paris in 1762 shall be the basis of the treaty to be made: It shall be renewed with such alterations only, respecting the possessions of the contracting parties, as the events of the war have made; with regard to all which, the present *Uti possidetis* shall be the rule, unless where the parties shall choose to vary it for mutual convenience.

It shall be an express condition, that the French immediately evacuate Rhode Island, and every other part of His Majesty's colonies in North America. No stipulation or agreement whatever shall be made with respect to His Majesty's rebellious subjects, who *can never be suffered to treat* through the medium of a *foreign* power.

If the Empress of Russia will effectuate such a peace as is here described, the King will, in that case, cede to Her Imperial Majesty, and to the Imperial crown of Russia, the Island of Minorca, this cession to take place

as soon as possible after the preliminaries of the above described peace are signed. A treaty of perpetual defensive alliance between Great Britain and Russia, of which treaty, the cession and guarantee of Minorca shall make a part, and shall be signed on the same day as the above-mentioned preliminaries: though the cession must be conditional, and cannot be made till after the service performed, yet the effectual engagement may be entered into immediately, but must, for many reasons, be kept absolutely secret for the present. When the Empress of Russia takes possession of Minorca, she shall purchase all the artillery, military stores, &c., that shall be found there; she shall also expressly engage that the port and harbours of Minorca, shall, at all times, be open to His Majesty's ships of war, as also to all privateers; and all ships belonging to His Majesty's trading subjects shall have free entry there, and pay no other duties than the common port duties paid at present.

To prevent the danger of a sudden attack upon Minorca during the present war, the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean shall receive orders to be attentive to its protection.

You see with what frankness we have gone at once as far as it is possible to go; a little time will now show whether Prince Potemkin is, or is not, mistaken in the opinion he entertains of Her Imperial Majesty's intentions. A great field is open to her, worthy her talents, and a rich harvest of real glory must attend her in the completion of such a plan. You will take care to let it be fully understood, that no other Court has the least knowledge of this business, and we expect that the whole should at present be an inviolable secret, trusted only to the Empress, Prince Potemkin, and yourself.

I am, with great truth and regard, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant, STORMONT.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT KEITH, VIENNA.

Petersburg, 10th, 21st Jan., 1781.

My Dear Sir,—You are too well informed of our rupture with the Dutch, for me to enlarge upon it. Our Royal Master's moderation and equity must be notorious on this occasion. Never did a nation so far forget its own dignity, its interests, and its safety, as this misguided republic; every effort they make will accelerate their ruin, and they have less to fear from our enmity than from the friendship of France. This transaction, like all others, has been grossly misrepresented to the Empress. Her Ministers abroad and at home are partial, prejudiced in their relations and reports. I have attempted to convey to her facts as they really are, and think I may venture to say that our enemies, however active, never will so far mislead her, as to make her believe that the support of Holland, in its present disputes, is a *casus fœderis* of the Convention just signed here.

His Prussian Majesty moves heaven and earth to fix this idea in her mind, and would willingly have himself become a member of the Neutral League time enough to have taken up the cudgels for the Dutch. I understand he proposes to them troops to any number, and to the Danes money to any amount, provided they employ the ships against us.

I can in the greatest confidence assure you that the Emperor has proposed to the Empress a treaty of defensive alliance, and reciprocal guarantee of all their dominions, on the same plan as that of 1746. He adds, it may be so drawn as not to destroy those subsisting between him and France, and between her and Prussia. She is most ready to accept this proposal, and has ordered

Count Panin to treat with Cobenzel on the subject. This is a profound secret, and was written in the Emperor's own hand. Let us strive, my dear sir, with all our might, to be admitted. You shall hear more soon.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 15th, 26th Jan., 1781.

I HAVE now the pleasure of assuring your Lordship of what I considered as probable in my last, and that the Empress accepts with the greatest satisfaction the proposition of a co-mediation * with the Court of Vienna, between England and the other belligerent powers. She agrees on all points to the proposals of the Emperor, admits Vienna to be the properest place for opening the negotiations, and, according to the wishes of the Austrian Ministry, destines Prince Gallitzin, now employed there, to be her Plenipotentiary on this occasion. I can venture to add, that she expects, with as great impatience as myself, the arrival of a courier from London.

My friend who was yesterday to have come to me, was taken so ill as to be forced to keep his bed; and, as I felt the importance of seeing him, however unfit I was to go out of my house, I took an opportunity of calling on him, at an hour when I knew he would be alone; he confirmed all I have just written, and added, that he never saw Her Imperial Majesty more elated than on the present occasion. That she entirely approved the mark of attention we had shown the Court of Vienna, and that I might expect, now she had so powerful a second, every act of friendship at her hands. He then mentioned to

* France and Spain had consented to this Mediation.

me the plan of the projected alliance, precisely on the same terms as I related in my letter of Tuesday, and added, that the Empress having asked for Count Panin's sentiments on this measure in writing, he had been inconsistent enough to give in his opinion for it, contrary to his avowed principles and conduct. That, however, to those who knew him, this was not extraordinary, as it was his invariable rule never to oppose anything in its first stage.

I hinted the possibility of the King of Prussia's wishing to be joined in this Mediation, and added, if he was, that not only we could no longer consider it as an impartial one, but that certainly the Emperor would withdraw. My friend left me no doubts on this subject. He assured me that the Prussian influence was sinking very fast, and every attempt to revive it would only hasten its entire destruction.

The whole of his discourse was confidential and satisfactory to a degree, and the pleasant accounts he gave me afforded me no small comfort in these moments of sorrow and dejection.* I am still, however, very unequal to the duties of my mission, but hope to recover my spirits time enough to execute the very important orders I am likely soon to receive. I know that my friends have applied for leave of absence for me; if, however, His Majesty, from an excess of that goodness inseparable from him, should be gracious enough to allow it to me, I before-hand beg leave to decline the accepting of it till such time as my absence from hence may not be attended with any inconvenience to his ser-

* He had just received news of the death of his father, to whom he was more than commonly attached; so much so, that he constantly declares, that the principal incentive to his exertions, and a great share of the pleasure he derived from the honours bestowed upon him, had ceased to exist with his father's life.

vice; I then, my Lord, shall think I have a right to claim it. In the meanwhile I shall forget every domestic consideration, and ask no other favour of your Lordship than that I have already solicited, an exertion of your candour and indulgence in my behalf, till my mind is restored to a state of composure and tranquillity.

I understand that the first proposition from the Mediating Powers will be for a general suspension of arms.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Tuesday, 19th, 30th January, 1781.

My Lord,—It is impossible for your Lordship to see in a stronger light than I do, the importance of preventing the Empress being mistaken, either in the motives or in the mode of our rupture with the Dutch. I feel that the effects of the pleasing work now on foot depend entirely on her comprehending this matter as it really is: that my success in this struggle is to determine all her future political conduct, and that the event is to confirm the triumph of our enemies or to destroy their hopes for ever.

Your Lordship has already seen the various steps I have taken to counteract these my several antagonists, and I trust it will not appear I have been idle or inattentive. At this moment my friend is ill a-bed, and it is impossible for him to convey what I say to him to Her Imperial Majesty, who is, on her side, confined to her apartment by a cold and rheumatism. Your Lordship is not unacquainted with the sentiments of Count Panin; nothing can be expected from him; his object is in direct contradiction to that I am to pursue,

and it is not in my power to make him act against both his opinion and his interests.

Things thus circumstanced, the only person from whom I could hope to derive any benefit was the Empress's private Secretary, and that, purely from his being an honest unprejudiced man, and who, besides the two I have just mentioned, is the only one with whom she discourses on foreign affairs. Mons. Besberodko rises daily in her esteem, and I waited on him yesterday morning, in order to enforce what I had already said to him about a fortnight ago, and to enable him, when talking to his Sovereign, to give her true and accurate information.

I therefore addressed myself to him as to a good and faithful subject, at whose hands I required nothing more than, at a proper opportunity, to relate the plain and simple truth. I begged him to recollect the very serious nature of the offence which had induced us to require satisfaction from the Dutch; to revert to the time it was committed, and to observe that it must have been first projected as early as the French declaration in 1777, if not even sooner; that it was a determined, deliberate act of hostility, avowed *by the author of it*,* and though, indeed, disavowed by the States General, yet from their conduct it might be fairly inferred, that while they disapproved the traitors, they were desirous of partaking of the advantages of the treachery; that with almost a blamable patience we had given them upwards of a month to reply to our representations; that at the expiration of this term their first answer was taking it *ad referendum*, the second still more injurious, making it over to a court of justice, and that it was not

* The Secret Treaty with America was concocted at Amsterdam, where the *Patriots* were triumphant, and it was acknowledged by Van Berkel the Pensionary.

till my Royal Master saw that they were adding an insult to an indignity, that he adopted those vigorous measures which his longanimity so long withheld him from putting into execution; that I was certain he was too well versed in the rights of nations and in the *droit public* not to see the heinousness of the injury and the mockery of the satisfaction offered; that an offence against the State could be punished by the State alone, and that the Republic might with as much propriety have put a negotiation for peace or war into the hands of the *Lieutenant of Police* as the punishment of the Pensionary of Amsterdam; that my utmost wish on this point was to obtain such a decision from the Empress herself as would arise from her own feelings. She would in our situation, I was certain, have acted as we have done, and she would have thought us unworthy her esteem if in the hour of danger and difficulty we had tamely and patiently put up with the injury we had received; that it required as little logic to overthrow the other preposterous idea our adversaries were full of, and to make every impartial person see that the Neutral League had nothing to do with our rupture with Holland.

If she wished, as she herself had repeatedly told me, to restore peace, she must avoid giving any encouragement to the Dutch. If she did, it would defeat her own intentions, and retard beyond all calculation the hour she seemed so warmly to desire, and which was to conclude the war.

The Empress's Secretary had heard with great attention what I said. He assured me on his word, that hitherto he could not infer from any part of Her Imperial Majesty's conduct or conversation the remotest intention of taking part with or encouraging the Dutch. On the contrary, she had commanded Count Panin to say to

their Ambassadors, that if they expected any countenance from her, they must be more impartial and moderate.

He added, that there was little probability of the King of Prussia making any further impressions here, and that the Empress was now acting on principles very different to his.

He concluded by promising to report all I had said to the Empress, and that in a few days he would inform me of her answer.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR JOS. YORKE, ANTWERP.

Petersburg, 22nd Jan., 2nd Feb., 1781.

DEAR SIR,—The very severe domestic loss I have sustained by the death of my father, will, I am sure, appear to your Excellency a very valid excuse for my not immediately acknowledging your letter of the 23rd December, from the Hague, and that of the 1st January from Antwerp. I was indeed as much prepared for this event as I well could be; but if such preparation took off from the pain of a sudden shock, it has not diminished that heartfelt affliction not in my power to suppress, and which, from the excellency of the character of him I am lamenting, reflection at least for a while must increase. I have ever, from your Excellency's kindness to me, considered myself as authorized in unbosoming myself to you. I do it now from that extreme satisfaction I feel in thinking you are not entirely indifferent to my loss, and that you will not refuse a tear for one who had certainly the highest and most cordial esteem for you. But I will not indulge myself in writing on a subject foreign to the main

bent of our correspondence; as however I am now deprived of the use of figures* my letters cannot be very edifying.

The whole of the conduct of our Royal Master fully justifies every step he has taken against the Dutch. The universal regret with which both our friends and enemies saw your Excellency leave the Hague, is the surest and most flattering testimonial that you can enjoy. It put you above the reach of reproach, and forebode what the sentiments of the Republic will be when it returns to a state of temper, and recovers from the delirious fever that now preys upon its vitals. I think the spring will not pass over without showing its errors in their strongest colours, and I must needs think too well of my old friends not to suppose, that when they see them they will reclaim, and return to that system where they will be so readily admitted, and which alone can make them happy and secure.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM MR. ELLIOT† TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT, SENT TO SIR J. HARRIS.

Berlin, — February, 1781.

A PERSON who has perused Count Goertz's last despatches, gave me in great confidence the following account: The King was exceedingly vexed at the Dutch war, and exclaimed, "Puisque les Anglois veulent la guerre avec tout le monde, ils l'auront," and showed the strongest marks of anger and disappointment. Count Panin was (according to Goertz's expression) *petrified*, and owned that he could not have thought Great Britain capable of so decisive a measure. Being asked whether Russia would be under the necessity of supporting her new ally,

* Sir Joseph had not got the key to his cipher. † English Minister at Berlin.

he gave an evasive answer, and appeared to be in great embarrassment. The despatch concluded by saying, that no determination will be taken till the sentiments of the Courts of Denmark and Sweden are known.

I have also learnt from a very secret channel the following circumstance: the Empress of Russia has written in her *own hand* a letter to the King of Prussia, stating the difficulty into which she was brought by the rupture between Great Britain and the United Provinces, and desiring to know whether she will be seconded by His Prussian Majesty, if she is drawn into a war by her efforts to support her new allies. My friend had not seen the King's answer, but expects soon to be made acquainted with it.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. ELLIOT TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

Berlin, 10th Feb., 1781.

THE same person who made me acquainted with the contents of the letter written by the Empress of Russia to the King of Prussia, has since given me the following important information.

The Empress foreseeing the little probability of obtaining His Prussian Majesty's support in a war with Great Britain, finishes the letter by desiring His Prussian Majesty to offer his Mediation to the United Provinces. The King's answer was, I am assured, that he had ever considered the present war as interesting the maritime powers only, that the object of it appeared to him of no very essential importance even to Russia, but certainly of still less to his own dominions; that were he to take any share in the quarrel, it would soon become general; a war on the Continent would be inevitable;—that with regard to the Mediation there were

insurmountable objections, besides his ignorance of maritime affairs, and the present state of Europe.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 2nd, 13th Feb., 1781.

I WAS not mistaken in what I foretold in my last. The answer of Her Imperial Majesty to the note delivered to Count Panin by the Dutch Ambassadors* is nearly to this purpose; that she is ready to ratify the Neutral Convention which she has already signed with the Republic, and will certainly fulfil every engagement she may contract by this act, but as the present rupture between Great Britain and Holland is from a motive which bears no reference to it, *the Dutch have not the smallest pretensions to claim any succours from her.*

Though not acquainted with the whole extent of Her Imperial Majesty's intentions, yet the Dutch Ambassadors consider their cause as lost, and I am told Starenberg has been injudicious enough to reproach Count Panin for having abandoned them, after having carried them so far. The Russian Minister himself, however, shares their disappointment, and adopts the common method practised in this country, when anything goes wrong, of staying at home, and saying he is indisposed. Count Ivan Czernicheff imitates him, and since Sunday they have both been confined by illness, and only see a few particular friends.

* They had just presented a note to the Empress, requiring for the States such succours as the several contracting parties of the Neutral Convention were bound to afford in case any of its articles should be violated by the Powers at War. These succours were demanded as an incontrovertible right, on the score that Great Britain had broken with the Dutch solely on account of the Armed Neutrality.—*Harris Papers.*

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 2nd, 13th Feb., 1781.

I HAVE been always attentive to cultivate the acquaintance of the Orlows, and, although they are the avowed enemies of my friend, I have hitherto had the luck of living on the best footing with them, without giving him umbrage. In this I am greatly facilitated by their very liberal character, and from their being well-wishers to England from principles of patriotism and sound reason. Count Alexis, the most enlightened, and most active of his family, though out of favour, has still great weight whenever he speaks to the Empress; he is peculiarly clear in his language, happy in his expressions, and talks to her with a freedom no one else can venture to use.

I had much conversation with him on his arrival, and I did all in my power to persuade him to lead the Empress to talk to him on political subjects. Yesterday he informed me of a discourse that passed between them on Monday. It arose from her having asked him, on Saturday, why on his late travels he did not visit England, and his having replied, before a large circle, that he was ashamed to show himself in a kingdom to whom Russia was under so great obligations, at a moment when the Russian fleet was sailing with a view to act in direct opposition to its most essential interests; that if he had appeared in London, he must have expected his old Mediterranean acquaintance* would have turned their backs on him; and when the Empress endeavoured to prove away what he said, he, still talking aloud, and before the company, entered into a detail of our friendly conduct during the late Turkish war, to which he himself had been a witness,

* Orlow commanded in the Mediterranean during the last Turkish war.

and to which he said he owed the little glory he had obtained.

The Empress made no reply at the time, but sent for him on Monday, when she received him in private. She immediately renewed the subject of Saturday, and after confessing that she was not quite pleased with her own behaviour towards the English, asked his opinion on the present situation of affairs. He replied, that his political sentiments had ever been the same; that he considered the French as a faithless, false nation, enemies to her and to her Empire; that if their conduct was changed, yet their designs were not, and that it gave him the most real concern to see that their flattery and specious language, had imperceptibly led her into measures so contrary to her former system, and so prejudicial to her permanent interests; that the English were, he granted, *less polite* than the French, but much *more sincere;* that they were the only true and useful friends Russia could have, and that if she was indifferent to the esteem and regard of a nation like ours, she ought not to be so to the loss of its good-will and friendship: he then told her what he himself had heard when abroad, and the part the French and Prussian party made her act in Europe; the manner in which they employed her name; and, in short, repeated to her what she had heard from me, and what Prince Potemkin had so often enforced, and the same sentiments coming from a man like Count Alexis, sunk deep in her mind.

The Empress replied, that she felt the truth of all he said, acknowledged herself as having laboured under an error, adding, she had gone too far, but she would yet set all right by giving her English friends a good and lasting peace; she then, he told me, ran into the strongest professions of invariable regard for the British

nation, expressed the greatest joy at our successes at Jersey,* and, to use her own words, was as completely English as himself.

I did not hide from the Count my obligations to Prince Potemkin, nor the strong and daily proofs I received of his friendship, to which alone, I attributed my having been able to maintain my ground here; I added, however all-powerful this great favourite was on many points, yet my opponents having fixed in the Empress's mind an idea that he received all his political impressions from me, she would not, when he talked to her on foreign affairs, pay that deference to his opinion she afforded him in most others; that therefore, it was in his (Count Alexis's) power to do me very essential service, particularly on two points of the greatest importance, on one of which, he was the properest person in the empire to speak: the first I said, was to convince Her Imperial Majesty of the necessity that America should remain entirely dependent on us, and that not less for her own sake than ours. The second, was, to prevent her from attempting to foist into the Treaty of Peace the principles of the Armed Neutrality; that, on these, no one could talk so pertinently to her as himself, who had commanded her fleet in the Mediterranean, and of course, who well knew that the first paragraph of her famous Declaration was a glaring error; that if his officers had conformed to these principles, they could not have taken a single prize.

I said, my Lord, all this and much more to Count

* The French were defeated in an attack on Jersey. Baron Rullecourt was promised the rank of General, the order of Saint Louis, and the Government of Jersey, if he could take possession of that Island. He attacked it with about 2000 men on the 6th of January, 1781, and surprised the Governor and Garrison at Saint Heliers, but was afterwards defeated and taken by Major Pierson, who was killed in the moment of victory.

Alexis, who entered with a cordial conviction into everything I advanced, and promised that a very few days should pass before he would enforce it all on the Empress, and added: "She cannot but admit the truth of what you say, when she hears it from two such different persons as Prince Potemkin and myself, and who never till now thought alike."

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, Tuesday, 16th, 27th February, 1781.

My Lord,—On Monday the Foreign Ministers had the honour of being admitted to that part of the palace called the Hermitage, and after seeing a French play performed in a most masterly manner by some of the young nobility of the country, of assisting at a ball and supper; and, on Friday, Her Imperial Majesty passed the evening at the Master's of the Horse, where the Corps Diplomatique was also invited.

My friend is ill in bed; his indisposition arises solely from his singular manner of living, and, till he changes this, he must not expect that sound health his robust constitution entitles him to. As his spirits and temper are always affected on these occasions, his illness naturally interrupts the progress of business, particularly as it prevents his going to the Empress, and as she does not now, as formerly, come to him. Your Lordship has probably read a very extraordinary letter of the Dutch Resident's here, printed in all the Foreign Gazettes, and to which in most of them, particularly in that of Cleves, is added a commentary containing some personal abuse, taxing me with having attempted to bribe the Russian Ministers. The Empress, who treated me both Thursday and Friday with even unusual distinction, talked to me

on this paragraph, saying that, if disappointment and anger gave the jaundice, the author of this article and not I was the best entitled to it.* She then, addressing herself to the select company with whom she supped, rallied it with infinite wit and humour, and the whole tenour of her conversation bore with it the strongest marks of friendship and good-will towards us. I should not have mentioned what may appear so immaterial, if this behaviour of Her Imperial Majesty had not caused a great sensation here, and given uncommon uneasiness to my opponents. I have, &c.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 23rd Feb., 6th March, 1781.

The Dutch Ambassadors have instructions to renew afresh their instances for succours from hence, and are leaving nothing untried to prevent Her Imperial Majesty from remaining spectatrix of their quarrel. They are powerfully supported here; yet I will not allow myself to suppose that anything can prevail on Her Imperial Majesty to depart from that wise resolution she took in the beginning of our rupture, of interfering in no other capacity than that of an impartial and neutral friend. Count Panin has not yet communicated to her what has passed between him and the Ministers of the Republic;

* The story alluded to has been repeated by some French and English writers, viz., That Sir J. Harris having written a paper in refutation of the principles of the Neutral League, which was to have been laid before the Empress by Potemkin, the Prince's pocket was picked by one of his low mistresses, in the pay of Count Panin. That Count Panin prepared, in consequence, a counter-statement, answering Sir James's arguments, and defeated his intentions. The whole anecdote is an invention.—*Harris Papers.*

I cannot, therefore, speak pertinently before the next post on this subject; I have, however, no reason to believe that the States General have furnished their Ambassadors with any new arguments, or that they are authorized to specify the commercial advantages they lately have been holding out to the Empress. I am sorry to say, however, that the whole bent of her mind is turned towards these objects, and that in most instances they go before the great political interests of the state.

My adversaries take advantage of this foible. They are redoubling their efforts, and seem determined to bring matters to a crisis by a decisive and vigorous struggle. I trust I shall be able in the course of a week to give your Lordship, by a safe conveyance, the result of the contest, in which, whether I fail or whether I succeed, I hope it will be taken into consideration the character I have to work on, the instruments I have to use, and the enemies I have to deal with.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

26th February, 9th March, 1781.

THE Ratifications of the Convention with the Dutch are now exchanged, the presents of each side made, and the business entirely concluded. The Empress remains firm in her resolution of excluding the Republic from the protection this Convention would have afforded them *if they had remained neuter*, and has enjoined her Ministers to reply to every instance they may receive from the Ambassadors, that she will do nothing more as long as they remain in their present situation than assist them with her good offices.

Her Imperial Majesty's Secretary was brought into public business by Marshal Romanzow. Count Alexis Orlow thinks highly of his parts and probity, and pronounces him to be a friend to England. Prince Potemkin very candidly informed me of the increase of his influence, and advised me to be attentive to him. These motives will sufficiently account for my lately having frequently applied to this gentleman, who, in everything which has passed between us, comes up perfectly to the character given of him. After discoursing with him on the Dutch transaction, and receiving from him assurances that its consequences would be in no shape hurtful to us, I pointed out to him the necessity that some just and impartial person should examine the instructions which would be given this year to the Russian sea-commanders, lest either wilfully or inadvertently their orders for protection should be extended to Dutch ships. I likewise urged the importance of recalling to the Empress's mind her intentions relating to the terminating this new quarrel, and not by delay give time for new ideas to arise or new impressions to be made. On both these points he answered very satisfactorily.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 9th, 20th March, 1781.

In a very friendly and satisfactory conference I had lately with his Excellency Count Panin, I repeated to him the assurances, that he would ever find the sentiments and intentions of my Court strictly conformable to what I had so often stated them to be, and that every possible care would be taken to secure the observance of

the additional instructions given to our privateers and other armed vessels. His Excellency, after making a very cordial reply, acquainted me that it appeared from Mons. de Simolin's late despatches, that your Lordship was under some uneasiness relative to the security of the Baltic under the circumstances of the Dutch war; that though he should write very fully on this subject to Mons. Simolin, yet he would not lose a moment's time in assuring me that it was Her Imperial Majesty's intention, in conjunction with the Courts of Sweden and Denmark, to keep this sea entirely free from privateers of every nation whatsoever, and that we might depend on its navigation being now as perfectly safe as in time of the profoundest peace.

Nothing could be better timed than the arrival of the messenger from Vienna; the pleasing marks of attention he brought have restored that warm glow of friendship in the Empress for the Emperor, which the intrigues of the Prussians and French had gone near to cool. Besides the best written and most friendly letters possible, the Emperor has sent her a screen which made part of the furniture of the private apartment of his late mother, and several other trifling marks of regard and remembrance which have had the very best effect. As to public business, he affects to submit the conduct of the whole to her.

All this intelligence I have collected by piecemeal from my friend, who alone sees this correspondence. He unfortunately still continues occupied with his niece's marriage, and treats everything else with an indifference and levity which almost gets the better of my patience, and which, if I had not frequently seen him labouring under the same infirmity, I should suppose to arise from a total change of character and sentiments. Count Co-

benzel, who lately is more communicative, though by no means entirely so, tells me, that hitherto everything goes on relative to the Mediation without a rub; that the Spanish answer is perfectly conformable to that of France, and that both of them agree as to the place and to the Ministers designed for the opening of the negotiation for peace.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 13th, 24th March, 1781.

My Lord,—It would be taking up your Lordship's time to very little purpose, if I were to lay before you a Journal of what has passed in numberless conversations I have had with Prince Potemkin on the interesting subjects contained in the letters I am now answering.

As it was necessary also for him to understand the great importance of the subject we were treating on, I requested him freely and candidly to tell me, whether he felt himself sufficiently active to carry it through without relaxation, whether he would make it, while the discussion lasted, the primary object of his thoughts, and not suffer it to be driven from his mind by those many objects of dissipation that daily came in his way; that it was too momentous a concern for me to suffer it to be trifled with, and that unless he would promise to afford it the strictest attention, I should expose myself deservedly to censure by entrusting him with the conduct of it. Your Lordship here, perhaps, may say, that such a language was harsh, and likely to disgust; but, besides my having frequently spoken to him on his uncommon levity, I was well aware, unless I stipulated some conditions of this kind, he would, with the best intentions

possible, not get the better of that indolence which never forsakes him, but at those moments when his personal influence is in danger.

Prince Potemkin very readily, and even with eagerness, undertook the whole of this commission, and was himself so satisfied with everything I reported to him from your Lordship, that he gave me the most flattering hopes of a complete and immediate compliance with everything I had in command to propose. He kept me the greatest part of the night (that which followed the day of Heslop's arrival) in interrogating me on the tenour and purport of the late Treaty of Paris; on the importance of the possessions we had lost and acquired during the present contest, and of the rise and progress of our troubles in America. I gave him, on these points, every information I was able, and was happy to set him right on several mistakes he laboured under. Notwithstanding his promises of being expeditious, more than a week elapsed before he brought me any answer from Her Imperial Majesty; I indeed pressed him regularly on the subject, and he as regularly imputed the delay to her. But as I well knew Her Imperial Majesty is remarkably exact, and never suffers any business to remain undone when it is once in her hands, I was not at all apprehensive of being deficient in respect towards her, when I was pushing him to be more alert. I was indeed more uneasy, lest the time he was losing should permit my opponents, who were uncommonly active at this moment, to throw obstacles in our way; and I never ceased urging on Prince Potemkin, that if he treated them and their artifices with contempt and indifference, at least not to afford them assistance by unnecessary procrastination.

Luckily, no part of my commission transpired, and the conjectures of our adversaries fortunately took directly

a wrong course, by supposing the journey of Haley,* and the return of Heslop, to have no other view than to obstruct the ratification of the Convention with the Dutch; it was on this score they fell upon me, both by their private and newspaper agents, and the lengths they have been weak enough to go, must hurt their own cause, and serve ours, as the Empress, better than any one, knows the falsehood of their assertions. But to return, Prince Potemkin brought me a written answer from Her Imperial Majesty. It was drawn up in her own hand in Russian, and he told me he had orders to translate it to me as often as I pleased, but not to put it into my possession. It was to this effect: "The Empress receives with the greatest satisfaction the assurances and proofs of His Majesty's friendship and confidence, which she feels she deserves from her sincere and invariable regard for the British nation, whose interest and welfare, next to those of her own subjects, she has the most at heart. She has proved this by ever seeking an intimate connexion with His Britannic Majesty, and the forming such a connexion was ever the first of her wishes. His Britannic Majesty does her but justice when he supposes that she earnestly desires to see the war end on terms honourable to him, and advantageous to his nation; those he has imparted confidentially to her are such, and she sincerely hopes to see them ratified. Her ideas perfectly correspond with his, as to the balance of power; and she never can see with indifference any essential aggrandizement, or essential diminution of any European state take place, (Prince Potemkin told me she here meant her disapprobation of the Independence of America, but that she did not choose to speak out plainer); that she was ready to act with the most perfect cordiality with her co-mediator, but that, as

* With the Despatches respecting the cession of Minorca.

she did not stand single, it was not in her power to be more explicit till she was acquainted with the sentiments of Her Imperial Colleague."

He told me that she strongly approved the conditions we had divulged to her; that she considered them as equitable and moderate, and certainly would do everything to obtain them for us except drawing the sword; that this, nothing but an attack on her own dominions, or the greatest of insults, would induce her to do.

I told him very candidly, that though everything I had just heard was perfectly friendly, and could not but give the greatest pleasure, yet these assurances had been so very strong, and, coming from Her Imperial Majesty's own mouth, were so very sacred, that, in making my report to your Lordship, I should be under the necessity, (forasmuch as to what she now said came short of them,) either to disavow what I myself had advanced, or else to represent Her Imperial Majesty as having departed from her intentions, to describe her as uncertain in her resolutions, and wavering in her sentiments; that truth and justice to myself left me no choice; that Her Imperial Majesty had required of me to obtain some undoubted mark of confidence and friendship towards her from my Court, and that then we should see how far her friendship for us would go; that I had very easily obtained what was analogous to the character and sentiments of my Royal Master and his confidential servants; that we had complied in the fullest manner with Her Imperial Majesty's request, and had undoubtedly effaced every idea of reserve and coldness, and substituted opposite ones in their place; that on our side, nothing remained to be done, and that we should wait with impatience till she realized the professions she had made use of, when she did me the honour of admitting me to a conference; that we never

wished her to draw the sword, nor to plunge her wantonly into a war; we only expected of her to exert effectually that great preponderance she enjoyed in Europe, &c.

I therefore repeated, that no conduct of ours could give room to a change of opinion, and that if it were changed it could only arise from the motives I before mentioned, from a decrease of that vigour and firmness which so gloriously characterised the beginning of Her Imperial Majesty's reign, and which prevented her actions keeping pace with her words.

There was too much truth in what I said to admit of altercation. Prince Potemkin agreed with me on every point; but told me I might be satisfied with having very completely overset any future intrigues France, Spain, Prussia, or Holland might set on foot during the course of the Mediation; and that if the Emperor was as well disposed towards us as his Imperial Mistress, and would say as much when he wrote to her, she still would come up to all she promised. "In the meanwhile," said he, "you may assure your Court, and I will pledge myself for the veracity of what I say, that she is kept back, purely from timidity, from having degenerated, and that if she dared, she would be as strongly English in her conduct as she is in her inclinations." I willingly credited the truth of what Prince Potemkin said, and am confirmed by every possible collateral intelligence, from Count Alexis Orlow, from Mons. Besberodko, men of character and veracity, and from every subaltern courtier whose intelligence and sentiments I can command. I am only to lament that this great Princess is sunk into an ordinary woman at so critical a conjuncture, and that she wants resolution and courage to remain in the same opinion, during the few weeks a messenger is going to and returning from England. I am now to speak to the most material part

of my instructions, to that most undoubted mark of His Majesty's friendship for Her Imperial Majesty, in offering to cede to her, on the most easy terms, the Island of Minorca. I have strictly adhered to your Lordship's orders on this point: it never has been discussed but between Prince Potemkin and me, and between him and the Empress. *I have left nothing in writing with either of them on the subject.* As, however, I could not prevail on Her Imperial Majesty to talk with me herself, I was obliged, for the sake of accuracy, to give Prince Potemkin a note of the heads of what I wished him to say; this note, however, was immediately restored when it had done its duty, and nothing relative to this transaction will ever be found among his papers.

Prince Potemkin appeared uncommonly satisfied with the readiness with which we consented to this cession. He was extremely pleased with the frankness with which I laid at once the whole business before him, and made no scruple of avowing, that the services we required of the Empress, and those we should render her, by adding this valuable island to her dominions, bore no proportion; that she owed what we asked to herself; and if she obtained Minorca on such terms, she should consider it as a present fallen from Heaven.

With this disposition, and under the conviction of doing an essential service to his Sovereign, he carried to her my proposals, and in a very few days reported to me the effect they had on her. He told me that he never on any occasion saw her more struck. Her first exclamation was, "*La mariée est trop belle; on veut me tromper.*" She then ran over in her mind, in the most rapid manner, all the advantages which would accrue from her being in possession of this island; and after indulging her imagination fully on this point, she adverted to the views she

supposed us to conceal under this specious offer. It would be impossible to follow her through the extravagant schemes she imputed to us. She talked of our being in concert with the Emperor, whom, she insinuated, we were tempting with still more seducing baits; that we should engage the Bourbon fleet to attack hers on the Mediterranean, if it attempted to protect Minorca. In short, after giving scope to the wildest suspicions, she ended by saying, that we wanted at any rate to *draw her into the war*, and that she would not listen to anything that might expose her subjects to this calamity.

My friend told her very plainly that no such end could be intended, since the cession was not to be made till the Preliminaries of Peace were actually signed, and that the fulfilling the agreement I now offered to make *depended on that event;* that the alliance which alone could engage her as a party in the war was not to be concluded till the war was at an end. He then, with very becoming spirit, told her she placed her suspicions wrong; that if she would give more credit to us, whom she had always found sincere, and who, from our constitution, were obliged to be so in all public transactions, and less to the French, who uniformly had been endeavouring to deceive her, she would be nearer the truth, and the measures she pursued would then be more salutary to her empire, and more conducive to her glory, than those she now was led into by misrepresentations, &c.

This freedom rather displeased her; but she did not, as he expected, fly into a passion; on the contrary, she appeared hurt from the truth of his observation; and, after walking in perfect silence up and down the room for some time, she bid him talk further with me on the subject. From me, however, he could learn nothing new;

neither could I suggest anything better to him than what his own excellent understanding furnished him with.

Many days passed before Her Imperial Majesty conversed with him again on this subject, and he, I believe, very judiciously did not begin on it himself, but chose to give her time to reflect. About a week ago she returned to it with great eagerness; recapitulated the various benefits which she would derive from this acquisition, and lamented that she could only obtain it by going to war. It was in vain Prince Potemkin attempted to drive this false idea from her head; it was irremovably fixed, and when he proposed to her to hear what I had to say on the subject, she replied, "I will not be led into temptation." My friend finding her so tenacious in her error, asked of her what answer he was to make me, adding that a simple repetition of what she said would be a very graceless return to one of the most generous offers ever made.

Her Imperial Majesty admitted this, and said she would give him a written answer to translate to me. In the meantime, she enjoined him to conceal these her suspicions from me; but the injunction came too late, as he had already acquainted me with all that had passed.

On Monday last he read me this answer; it was, like the other, in her own hand, apparently often corrected, and in Russian. It was to this purport:

"Her Imperial Majesty is extremely sensible of the friendly offer the Court of London has made her; she has already said, and again repeats, that she shall be most happy to contribute to obtain for Great Britain a just and honourable peace. That she will work strenuously with her colleague to effect this end; and if she should be fortunate enough to succeed, she then with

the greatest pleasure will enter into the closest connexion with England, and cement this connexion by any means the most likely to render it useful, sincere, and lasting. As long, however, as she is employed as Mediatrix, His Britannic Majesty must be sensible she cannot, with any propriety, enter even into an eventual Convention with him, since, as the object of this Convention must sooner or later transpire, it will appear on some future day as if she had, during the Mediation, been influenced by one of the belligerent powers, and her impartiality and justice might be called in question. Nothing," she added, "could be stronger than her friendship for England, and nothing gave her more pleasure than the proofs she received of regard and good-will from thence."

My friend's commentary on this text amounted to this; that she has a longing desire to have Minorca, but that she has not courage to subscribe to the means by which alone it can be got.

In my discourse with Prince Potemkin, and in conversing with all those who approach the throne, I ever held that unaffected plain language so well calculated to convey a just idea of our forbearance towards the Dutch, and of their unjust behaviour towards us. As I well knew that the uniting this quarrel with the Armed Neutrality was the first wish of our antagonists, I carefully avoided letting anything drop which might forward this idea; I rested my arguments on the facts set forth in His Majesty's Manifesto, and never mentioned the irritable topic of the Neutral League, unless as a thing absolutely independent of the general system, and on which we had, in our answers to the several contracting parties, been already sufficiently explicit.

A competent degree of success has followed this conduct; I have not, indeed, been able to hinder the ratification of the Convention with Holland, but I have prevented the *immediate evils* with which this accession threatened us. I have prevailed on Her Imperial Majesty not to stir otherwise than as a well-wisher to both countries, and to show this determination by holding out conditions by no means dishonourable to us. It has been a very arduous and even painful task to curb the extraordinary rancour of her Minister on this occasion; he has given it unbounded scope, and I never, since my residence here, met him before in such avowed and illiberal opposition to me.

The King of Prussia is indefatigable in his attempts to check this growing influence of the Emperor, and as he is a perfect master of the *carte du païs*, he has converted several of the courtiers, amongst others, Mons. de Betskoy and Madame Ribas, who, from being warmly attached to the interests of the Court of Vienna, are now become the strenuous advocates of those at Potzdam, and as they have daily access to the Empress, and are (though very unjustly) considered by her as simple, plain people, they often do very serious mischief.

Mons. de Betskoy is a man of near eighty, at the head of the different establishments for education in this country, and has possessed the Empress's good-will from her first coming into Russia. Madame Ribas is a dependant on him, and was by him put about Her Imperial Majesty as *femme de chambre*. She married some few years ago an Italian. Great assurance, great cunning, and a deep knowledge of all the gossip of Petersburg, make her conversation entertaining.

All those who were French agents are now equally

Prussian Agents, and when joined they make a very formidable phalanx.

My friend Cobenzel begins to feel the truth of all I told him, and to perceive that in this country it is impossible to be well with everybody.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT M. KEITH, VIENNA.

Petersburg, 13th, 24th March, 1781.

My dear Sir,—I cannot inform you better of what is going forward than by leaving, under flying seals, such of my duplicates to Lord Stormont as contain anything worthy your attention, or which may be of use for you to know. This saves me a great deal of trouble at a moment when I have no time to spare, and will convey to you my intelligence, &c., much more accurately than in a separate and single letter.

I hope Count Cobenzel will be satisfied with the manner in which I assist him; he need not be fearful of my affecting a mysterious intimacy with him. I am grown grey in the harness, and well know the quackeries of our profession. You are too kind to me in the pleasing things you say of me; I feel I deserve none of them, unless it be those which belong to a very assiduous zeal in behalf of one of the best and one of the most injured countries. Here I yield to no one, and it supports me, nay, it enables me to amuse myself with some of the most illiberal and disgraceful attacks personal animosity ever made. His Prussian Majesty has a mind to leave me under no obligation for the

many marks of distinction he honoured me with during my stay at Berlin.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 13th, 24th March, 1781.

I AM very happy to find that it does not appear that I fling away too much of the public money in obtaining necessary intelligence. The lavishness of the French, and even of the Prussian party, in the present moment, is beyond conception, and their profusion will I fear make me appear very extravagant. The Empress herself sets the example; she gave Prince Potemkin the other day, for no reason in the world, 40,000*l.* sterling, and so spoilt is this singular man that he scarcely considered the sum worth thanks. It is remarkable, that in the ukase on the Treasury, it is set forth that Her Imperial Majesty makes Prince Potemkin this gratification for the assistance he has given her, in perfecting the Armed Neutrality. He himself insisted on this notorious falsehood being inserted, in order to prevent, on some future day, any suspicions of his having been *bribed by us*—his character is strongly marked by this trait.

I have often been conscious of the remark your Lordship makes, and have myself felt, that I was not acting up to the character of an English Minister, in bestowing such fulsome incense on the Empress; but here, too, I was drawn from my system and principles by the conduct of my adversaries. They ever addressed her as a being of a superior nature, and as she goes near to think herself infallible, she expects to be approached

with all the reverence due to a divinity. The *freedom* with which I spoke to her will, I fear, prevent my ever seeing her again *alone*.

As long as my stay here may be thought essential for His Majesty's service, I have not a word to say. I trust, however, in your Lordship's friendship for me, not to suffer the term of my residence here to be extended to a very distant day. So many cogent domestic reasons exist for my making this request, that I am sure your Lordship will not think it unreasonable. I fear, in the meanwhile, it will appear that I am thought too well of, and that in the event I shall be found unable to resist the force with which my antagonists bear down upon me; yet I can safely say that Count Panin, who heads them, can accuse me neither of inattention, nor of uncandid opposition. I have ever considered him with that respect due to one in his rank, of his age, and possessing in an eminent degree so many amiable social qualities. I have, indeed, ventured to differ from him in his political sentiments, because I could not agree with him without betraying my country, without subscribing to tenets and doctrines which would have brought on me disgrace and censure. As long as I saw any hopes of reclaiming him, I expostulated freely and confidentially with him; but it would have been the most unbecoming weakness, if, when I found that he was in secret intelligence with our worst enemies, I had credited the specious language he held me, or been tame enough not to seek elsewhere for friendship and support. I never laid anything to his charge I could not prove beyond a doubt. I told the Empress boldly what I thought of him, because it was my duty so to do. I disclosed to my friend his artifices and

intrigues, whenever they came to my knowledge, because they were chiefly directed against the interests of my Royal Master. When these were not concerned I was heedless of anything he said or did; and I was in hopes to have abated his inveteracy by not affecting to observe the very unpleasing effect of his animosity. I never attacked him in that dark way in which he has attacked me, and my whole conduct, if faithfully examined, will tend to prove, that I wished to live personally well with a minister with whom, on public concerns, my duty obliged me to differ; while the whole of his will deposit that he could not forgive me for not submitting to be amused and deceived by him.

Your Lordship will scarcely credit it when I assure you, from the most undoubted authority, that he passes whole nights in composing *suppositious letters*, calculated to hurt his enemies and serve his friends; these he produces as intercepted at the Post-office, and as written by Count Cobenzel or by me, or by such minister as best serves his purpose; as the originals are only supposed to be detained while they are to be copied, no one can call in doubt the authenticity of these productions, which are given as *deciphered translations from our despatches*. The mischief they do is the greater, as the blow cannot be parried, and the only use I can derive from this extraordinary information is, knowing the evil without knowing the cure, since if I was to attempt to discover it, my informers would disown what they said, and I should get no one to believe that of which I myself am certain. The Empress, indeed, seems to have entirely withdrawn her confidence from him, and though she still listens to his dark insinuations, because he has art enough to convey

them in a way which speaks to her passions, yet she does almost the whole business of the Foreign Department through her Private Secretary.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 26th March, 6th April, 1781.

The Empress postpones, from day to day, coming to her final resolution relative to the signing the treaty with the Emperor. She certainly strongly wishes to conclude this Alliance, and is now withheld from it, solely by this consideration of etiquette.* The Prussian impressions, and everything, indicate a complete return of her regard for, and confidence in the Emperor.

After having written herself to the Princess of Wirtemberg, in favour of the marriage† Her Imperial Majesty proposes, she sent for the Grand-Duke and Duchess, dictated to them the letters she wished them to write, made them write them before her, and inclosed them in her packet for Montbelliard. Their Imperial Highnesses feel this act of authority and mistrust sensibly, and when known, it will undoubtedly greatly displease His Prussian Majesty. I well know Alopeus; he was brought up under the Vice-Chancellor, and on the death of Count Panin's French secretary, in 1778, chosen to do his business, though without receiving his title or emoluments. I thought him at the time well disposed, and showed him such attentions as I knew, from his venal character, were

* The question was, which of the imperial names should stand first in the Treaty.

† Between the Grand-Duchess's sister and the Arch-Duke Francis.

the most likely to please him. These I continued till I found he betrayed me to the Prussians and French, to whose interests now he is entirely devoted, and from whom he has received such *notorious* marks of favour, as even to create astonishment here. It was chiefly on his account that the Empress has given the new orders relative to Count Panin's office, and I think it not improbable that he will be dismissed entirely. If I find he ever can be of use, either to do good or prevent harm, I shall not neglect him.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO MORTON EDEN ESQ., COPENHAGEN.

Petersburg, 30th March, 10th April, 1781.

My dear Sir,—I hope and believe we have seen the worst effects of the Armed Neutrality. The rage for pushing it here seems abated, and the Dutch will strive in vain to wrest it into a stipulation in their favour. Only five Russian ships will this year pass the Sound: these will go immediately to Leghorn, and return as soon as possible. The Empress's present passion is that of peace-making; a passion we shall be ready to second her in, if she sets about it on fair and equitable terms; such as these, she at present seems inclined to approve, but, if she does not, we certainly shall prefer a burthensome war, to an ignominious peace.

The King of Prussia is making every effort to check the growth of the Austrian interests here, and to recover his own. His habitual influence over the Czarina's councils, the perfect knowledge he has of her character, and the numberless dependants he has made himself here,

joined to the known partiality of her successor for him and his measures, give him advantages no other Sovereign has.

He has constantly contrived to throw obstacles in the way of a closer union between the two Imperial Courts, and has done, and is doing, everything in his power to take the Mediation out of the hands of the Emperor, and put it into his own. I trust he will not succeed in either of these points, and that many days will not elapse before matters will be so far advanced as to put it out of the reach of his intrigues to change the new system the Empress seems determined on. I, for the moment, must remain spectator; I have had my share as actor, and my turn will again soon come; in the meanwhile a little relaxation is both necessary and pleasant to me.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 9th, 20th April, 1781.

SINCE I last wrote, I have been told that the Empress's dissatisfaction at our not accepting her offer of a separate Mediation with the Dutch, is likely to carry her back to those unfriendly sentiments from which she was departing.* She considers this refusal as a want of confidence, and as disrespectful; and, without entering into any of the very important political motives which regulated our conduct on this occasion, she attributes it solely to per-

* Although we had accepted of the Empress Mediation between us and our *old* enemies the French and Spaniards, we declined it with regard to our *new* ones the Dutch.

sonal inattention for her. I am sorry to say this idea arises from herself alone, and was not insinuated to her by Count Panin, or any other of our adversaries. She bore strong marks of discontent in her countenance when I paid my court to her in the Easter holidays, and treated me with a coolness and reserve she never did before. At supper, Tuesday, at the Master's of the Horse, Mons. Narisken, to which formerly I was the only foreigner admitted, and lately Count Cobenzel, she ordered the French Minister, and the Dutch Ambassador, Starenberg, to be invited; and though she addressed a good deal of her conversation to me, yet it was not with that cordiality, and, if I may say so, familiarity she had accustomed me to.

I have had, on this occasion, two very long conferences with my friend; but I could not obtain from him any satisfactory assurances, or even a promise to attempt to dispel the cloud gathering against us. He agreed entirely in all I said, admitted the propriety, even the necessity, of our preferring a general to a partial negotiation, and blamed, in still stronger terms than I durst to do, the captious temper of his Sovereign for being offended at us. He assured me that when our answer was first received, he had used his utmost endeavours to set her right, and had left nothing untried to prevent its making false impressions; that he was in hopes he had succeeded, since, during the holy week, she had never spoken on the subject; and that he was sincerely sorry to see that her capricious displeasure now broke out afresh. He then, my Lord, entered more fully into her character than ever he had done before; he said she was fallen off beyond conception; that she never remained a day in the same sentiment; that she was ignorant of the interests of her empire; she suspected her friends, and trusted her

enemies; that she was so jealous of her own opinion, that she never would receive advice unless it was conformable to it; that she was become insensible even to glory, and listened to nothing but the most contemptible flattery. In a word, that her character was of a nature to be operated upon by the first gust of passion, and that wholesome counsel and systematic reasoning were lost upon her.

After saying thus much, he added, that he was resolved no more to interfere in any public concerns; that the part he had already taken had only tended to increase the number of his enemies, and to create jealousies in the Empress's mind, without serving the cause and friends he wished to serve; that to these he would remain firmly attached, and that he was certain, when Her Imperial Majesty felt, and she must soon feel it, the effects of the errors she was committing; she would come back to him for relief; that then he might make his own terms, and speak without being exposed to the caprices and whims of the most fluctuating character he ever knew.

It would have been very unguarded to have replied to this kind of language, particularly as I could easily perceive it arose from pique, and though it sufficiently proved that no efforts of mine could avert the storm, yet I saw, beyond a doubt, that I had to do with an angry Sovereign, and a discontented favourite. As long, therefore, as they remain in this temper, I must let them alone, and try what I can effect through other channels.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT KEITH, VIENNA.

Petersburg, April 10th, 21st, 1781.

MY DEAR SIR,—There is a considerable interval between the letter I wrote you by the post and this; but you must impute it to delays of a different nature, which have retarded the departure of Cobenzel's courier, who has been upon the wing for the last fortnight. This intermediate space has not been void of events. The publicity of all transactions, which at this Court pass through the foreign department, has had the disagreeable effect of making known to Europe at large the secret commissions with which my worthy colleague has lately been entrusted. The projected, and almost concluded Treaty of Alliance,* and the obstacle which has arisen at its termination, were known at Potzdam and Versailles as soon as the post could carry the intelligence there.

These Courts (for, however specious the language of the French ministry, their operations here are perfectly united) have, (that of Berlin avowedly, that of France clandestinely,) flung every obstacle in its way they could devise. They have had recourse to every stratagem political cunning can employ. I do not love to say we are weak, that we are not exempt from the failings of the frailer sex, but for the high veneration and esteem I bear the Great Empress I am accredited to, I had rather she should be corrected of these errors by the admonitions of her friends than stay till they become palpable, by the triumphs of her enemies. She has so many great

* Between the Empress and Emperor.

and eminent qualities, that when she strays, from her own want of reflection, or is misled by the counsels of others, I think her in the situation of a miser who spoils a sumptuous feast to save a guinea.

We, my dear sir, belong to a country, and are subjects of a Prince, independent in every sense of the word. Those who wish us well will feel the good effects of our friendship ; those who slight us will not be insensible to our indifference ; and our enemies will rue the day when they brought on themselves the vengeance of our "red right arm." *

The Empress is a good deal dissatisfied with our having refused her separate Mediation for the Dutch. She is too vain, both on this and the point of etiquette, now in discussion with your Court, to advert to anything but what regards herself alone. Political motives and systematic reasonings are not felt by her.

I cannot too often repeat, that mutability is our first feature, and that I never can be responsible when I write that the same opinion or sentiments will last till I receive the answer. Let us, however, go on boldly. England, when united in itself, is a match for all Europe ; and an English minister, active, upright, and sincere, has nothing to hope or fear from either the intrigues of his foreign colleagues or those of the Court where he resides. I shall persist in this doctrine, and abide by the event.

* Prophetic of the events of 1813, 14, and 15.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Friday, 16th, 27th April, 1781.

I mentioned in mine, April 20th, that the Dutch Ambassadors, on our having declined the separate mediation, had again applied here for succours; and that the Empress had ordered Count Panin to draw up an answer to their request. I understand it is to be to this purpose: that although there is *every reason to believe* England has broke with Holland in *hatred* of the Neutral Convention, yet as the motives set forth in the King's Manifesto, and in other public acts, since the declaration of war, are of a nature perfectly distinct from it, and are so very plausible and specious, a rupture cannot be made a *casus fœderis*.

Such are the contents of the foul draught of the answer (not yet seen by the Empress), but which will, in all probability, meet her approbation, since, in fact, it says nothing at all, and is expressive of her peevishness towards us.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Friday, 23rd April, 4th May, 1781.

Count Panin is at last fixed in his resolution to go into the country. He has asked and obtained from the Empress leave of absence for three months, and is hastening his departure as much as possible: his friends disapprove the step he is taking; and the Prussian, French, and Dutch ministers consider themselves as left without a chief. My hopes, however, do not rise as theirs sink; and I fear his genius will not less prevail

when he is absent than when he is present. The means by which he carries his points are so concealed, his operations so covered and so slow, that it is indifferent whether he directs them near, or at a distance from the scene of action. He leaves the Vice-Chancellor thoroughly devoted to his interests; and by holding out to him, in the name of the Grand-Duke, the most flattering prospect on some future day, there is little doubt but that he will be staunch in his cause. His own Principal Secretary, Bacounin, comes under the same description; and he, in conjunction with Alopeus, are to be instructed in the whole Foreign Correspondence. It is, indeed, beyond a doubt, that he does not enjoy the smallest portion of the Empress's favour or confidence. That, besides suspecting his political principles, she dislikes him personally; and that though she wants resolution to dismiss him, she would receive his resignation with pleasure.

His cunning and unremitting zeal for His Prussian Majesty's service has likewise taken care to put an insurmountable objection in the way of the marriage between the Grand-Duchess's sister and the Grand-Duke's son.* He conveyed, as I already informed your Lordship, the earliest news of this projected union to Potzdam; and after the King of Prussia, with a view to defeat it, had proposed unsuccessfully the Prince of Denmark for this Princess, Count Panin strongly urged him to offer a Prince of his own family. This His Prussian Majesty at first refused; but he has at last listened to repeated instances sent from hence, and for some time she has been secretly affianced to the young Prince of Prussia. This fact, which is not yet known to the Empress, and with which the Grand-Duke and Duchess were acquainted, when she required of them to write the two letters I

* Vide p. 408.

mentioned, will, I am convinced, raise in her the most violent indignation, when it becomes public. The intrigues of Count Panin must then appear in a very forcible manner; and I am assured the principal motive of his Excellency's hastening his departure is to avoid the storm that will break upon him on the return of the messenger from Montbelliard.

He well knows that no sentiments, either of displeasure or of favour, are of long duration in the Empress's mind, and relies that this matter will be made up and forgotten before his return. Thus, my Lord, does this minister, by evasions and dark intrigues, obtain his own ends, and defeat those of his adversaries, and, without weight or interest, direct the councils of this empire. He derives this faculty from the peculiar character of the Empress, and from the careless, inconsistent one of my friend. If, however, Her Imperial Majesty suffers this last artifice to pass over unnoticed, and if she does not resent the disrespectful duplicity with which she has been treated, we must suppose that nothing will induce her to depart from her invariable system of general clemency. The growing Austrian influence will be nipped in its bud, and the declining one of Prussia be restored with fresh vigour; and we who must expect nothing good from hence, while a shadow of this last remains, may, if it gains ground, look forward to much evil.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 27th April, 8th May, 1781.

My Lord,—I mentioned to your Lordship in my last, that the Grand-Duchess's younger sister was affianced to the young Prince of Prussia. Your Lordship will recollect that, at the instigation of His Prussian Majesty, on

his being first made acquainted with the views of the Emperor, the Queen Dowager of Denmark was induced to ask this Princess in marriage for her grandson; that she then wrote on this subject to the Empress, and that Her Imperial Majesty answered, she could not interfere, as another match was in contemplation: a reply to this answer is now just received from Copenhagen, expressive of the Queen Dowager's concern, on not being able to form so desirable a connexion. That she was, however, glad to find the marriage the Empress alluded to was to a Prince of the House of Brandenberg, as the union between the three Courts would be still made stronger from her having, on the receipt of the Empress's letter, asked and obtained, for her grandson, the daughter of the *Prince of Prussia*, by the Princess of Brunswick.

The Empress, who received the first news of these intended marriages from this letter, was exceedingly angry: she sat down and with her own hand wrote immediately to the Queen Dowager to the following purpose: "That she was surprised a Princess of Wirtemburg should be more sought than a Mary of Burgundy, a Queen Elizabeth, or the late Empress of Russia who brought kingdoms in marriage; that she was totally ignorant of any of the projected connexions Her Majesty mentioned; that the marriage she referred to, was not with a Prince of Brandenberg, but with a nephew of the Emperor; that she had proposed this to the Grand-Duchess's mother, and hoped that nothing would prevent its taking place." She would suffer no alteration to be made in this letter, and sent it away in the same words she made use of in the first moments of her displeasure and surprise.

These will certainly increase to a very great height when the whole intrigue is discovered; when she finds

that Count Panin from the beginning has betrayed her; that it was he that urged the King of Prussia repeatedly to propose his own nephew; and that her own children and her own Minister have been acting in concert to oppose her. It would be easy for me to kindle this flame at once; but I am convinced it will blaze out more violently when the facts speak for themselves, and which no cunning or artifice can prevent their doing in a very short time. Count Panin is hastening his retreat, and the Grand Duke and Duchess pressing him to stay. Their apprehensions increase in proportion as the time for the return of the courier from Montbelliard draws near, and they dread being left alone to resist the impending tempest.

My friend still remains in a state of insensible indifference, and I cannot fix his attention for five minutes to a serious subject. He has now again, the game in his own hands, but I fear his levity and indolence will prevent his taking advantage of it. An attempt has been again made to burn the ships of war at Cronstadt; the fire was discovered before it got to a head, but the incendiaries are unknown. Our enemies, as usual, impute it to us; but the accusation is stale, and merits not the smallest credit from the Empress. She wrote a very peremptory letter to Count Czernichew, who presides at the Admiralty, enjoining him to employ every means to find out the guilty persons, but at the same time to be very careful not to accuse the innocent. The Empress, on suspecting that some ships, intended for privateers, were building at Archangel, on American account, has given orders that they should be stopped. She likewise has signified to the Russian concerned with Sayre in building two large ships on the Neva, that if it appears that he has

any share in them, they shall not enjoy her protection. These declarations are the more pleasing, as they are spontaneous, and as they have come to my knowledge, not ministerially, but accidentally.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Friday, 30th April, 11th May, 1781.

I DINED on Wednesday with Prince Potemkin at Czarsco Zelo. He had expressed a desire of seeing me; and, as soon as his company left him, he talked upon the interests of our two Courts in so friendly and so judicious a manner, that I regret more than ever his frequent relapses into idleness and dissipation.

After we had dismissed this subject I discoursed with him on what concerned us more nearly, and begged him to inform me of the temper of the day. He assured me that the Empress had got over in great measure the dissatisfaction she had felt on our having declined her single Mediation, and that he evidently saw from all she did, and from the general tenor of her conversation, that her friendship for us was still entire. He then related to me the answer given to the Dutch, and assured me that she was heartily tired of the Armed Neutrality, and was now as desirous to see its end, as, not long ago, she was eager in setting it a-foot. It will appear strange to your Lordship, after hearing this language on Wednesday from a person so perfectly acquainted with the sentiments of his Sovereign, and who certainly did not endeavour to deceive me, that on Thursday I was told from unquestionable

authority, that His Prussian Majesty* had again applied to be admitted into the Northern League, and that the Empress had not only acquiesced in it, but given orders for the document necessary for his admission to be drawn up immediately. This fact is the more singular, as after having heard myself from her own mouth that she would not object to his accession, she, on His Prussian Majesty's application to accede, flatly refused† him, and even went so far as to order her Secretary to inform officially Count Cobenzel of this refusal; and now, when she has every reason to be dissatisfied with the King of Prussia, when the two Courts of Vienna and Petersburg are striving to vie with each other in acts of friendship and attention, she has again altered her opinion, and receives him into the confederacy without an objection.

Unless we may attribute this conduct to what my friend told me, and that she really considers the Armed *Neutrality* as an Armed *Nullity*, we must look for its explanation in that singular levity of temper of which every day affords me fresh and painful instances.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 7th, 18th May, 1781.

My Lord,—I understand that the new favourite, Morduinoff, who has for a long time back performed the duties of his office, will in a few days be admitted to the honours of it, and the present titulary one, Landskoy, resign to him his apartments in the several palaces.

* The King of Prussia wrote himself to the Empress to make this request.—*Harris Papers.*

† She said that the King of Prussia asked for a protection which he could not afford in return, not being a Maritime power.—*Harris Papers.*

These revolutions are moments when the influence of my friend is without bounds, and when nothing he asks, however extravagant, is refused. I wish I could prevail on him to employ them, once in his life, in a manner honourable to himself and beneficial to his country and his friends, and not misuse them by adding to a fortune already preposterous, and increasing by this means the envy and hatred of those on whom, sooner or later, the leaving him in quiet possession of this fortune will depend.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 14th, 25th May, 1781.

My Lord,—The old favourite still holds by a thread, and will scarce be quite discarded till the Court removes to Peterhoff. While things remain in this state, the Court is a scene of confusion and inattention not to be imagined, particularly as Landskoy has conducted himself in so unexceptionable a manner as not to afford the smallest pretext for dismissing him. He is neither jealous, inconstant, nor impertinent, and laments the disgrace he foresees impending, in so pathetic a manner, that he puzzles both his Sovereign and her confidants how to get rid of him, without appearing harsh. The successor, however, presses hard upon him, and compassion will soon give way to a stronger feeling. I understand my friend proposes to make use of the unbounded power these moments will give him, in obtaining not less than 700,000 roubles for himself, and of course more dignified objects will be forgotten or postponed to a day when his attempts to succeed will be in vain.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT M. KEITH, VIENNA.

Petersburg, May 29th, 9th June, 1781.

I HAVE lately endeavoured to keep you so well informed of what is and has been going on here, that there remains little more for me to say by the return of Count Cobenzel's messenger, than to repeat to you my acknowledgments for the several kind and instructive letters you sent me by him.

This messenger carries back answers wide of our hopes, and I much fear will be the last that will ever pass between the two Imperial Courts on the subject of their Alliance. Her Imperial Majesty, contrary I must confess to my expectations, and in contradiction to that wise and liberal system of conduct which has so often characterised her reign, persists in refusing to comply with a point of etiquette to which every Sovereign in Europe, under all circumstances, has conformed* The Treaty so nearly concluded is broken off, and though the interests of the two Courts remain the same, and the avowed inclinations of reciprocal and invariable regard of the two Sovereigns are supported by the strongest professions, yet the main point is wanting, and, by the deficiency of a solemn and public engagement, full scope is given for the intrigues of their respective ill-wishers to operate; and instead of looking forward to that pleasing prospect this wise connexion offered us, we now may be thankful if the storm does not get blacker.

It is impossible to say what determined the Empress's final opinion on this occasion. I believe the *publicity* her own Minister *intentionally* gave to the first diffi-

* The Emperor, as head of the German confederation, could not yield the point.

culties she raised, has not a little contributed to regulate it, and that the shame of retracting is not the least powerful motive in her mind. Her irresolution has been remarkable, and I do not add a syllable to the truth, when I say, that she varied in her decision not less than *four* times, and even now I am convinced she is dissatisfied with herself, and at moments perceives she is doing the business of those whom she looks upon as opposing her in all operations.

It is some consolation for me to learn, that the Mediation will not be interrupted by this puerile dilemma, and that the Mediating powers seem in earnest to push this salutary work.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Tuesday, 8th, 19th June, 1781.

I UNDERSTAND that the King of Prussia gave up his claim on the young princess of Wirtemburg in a manner very flattering to the Empress, and that she is perfectly satisfied with him. The marriage between this Princess and the Emperor's nephew is now no longer a secret here, and, if any faith can be placed in appearances, Her Imperial Majesty still retains, notwithstanding her complaisance to His Prussian Majesty, and the failure of the treaty, her predilection for the Court of Vienna.

I own, my Lord, I sometimes think that on the score of this Treaty, there is some secret and mysterious transaction between the Empress and the Emperor, unknown to any one but themselves. Various circumstances confirm me in these suspicions, and I am endeavouring if possible to get at the truth, though it is very deeply concealed, and I do not know through what channel I may arrive at it.

My friend, though in high spirits and perfectly cordial, has affectedly avoided every political subject for this last week, and I never have been able to lead him, during that time, into any serious discourse. The Empress's Secretary, and the Empress herself, have lately been working very hard, without anything appearing; for the new project, relative to the Mediation, was prepared at Vienna, and nothing on that subject remained to be done here.

I remark too, that my informers are at a loss what to say to me; and, as I am too well informed to be deceived by false intelligence, they certainly, though in a situation generally to know everything, are, at this moment, ignorant of what is going forward. If I join to these circumstances the most marked dejection in the Prussian Minister, and the very uncommon attention the Empress paid yesterday to Count Cobenzel, in coming out of the play, your Lordship will allow my doubts not to be without foundation. I hope, in a post or two, to be able to clear them up.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Friday, 25th June, 6th July, 1781.

THE Empress expressed great satisfaction at the reply your Lordship made in his Majesty's name to the communication of her Minister, declaring that Her Imperial Majesty considered the Dutch as a Belligerent, not as a Neutral Power, and that, although they were admitted to the Convention, they could not be entitled to the privileges belonging to it, till such time as their Republic was at peace.

On perusing Mr. Simolin's letters, she was glad, she said, to find that at last we understood her meaning,

and no longer suspected her of having any concealed views, prejudicial to the interests of the British nation, or inconsistent with the perfect friendship she bore it. This was told me by Prince Potemkin, and confirmed to me by the Vice-Chancellor and Mr. Besberodko. Your Lordship, however, will either have already received, or soon receive, another verbal "insinuation" from the three Northern Courts, recommending us still to make peace with the Dutch; but it will not be conceived in strong terms, and was meant merely to satisfy the clamours of the Ambassadors here, and to palliate Mr. Simolin's declaration of the 19th May.* I know it is not supposed that it will produce the smallest effect, and nothing more is expected from us than a civil answer, similar to those we have already given, whenever we have been spoken to on the Dutch war.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

25th June, 6th July, 1781.

My chief, and I may say, sole motive for despatching the messenger at this moment, is, to inform your Lordship by a safe conveyance, and without running any of those risks inseparable from the common post, that the Treaty between the two Imperial Courts of Petersburg and Vienna is concluded.

The Emperor has consented to the mode the Empress proposed, and it is signed by the two Sovereigns themselves, under the *form of a letter*. No alteration is made in the articles. It is a Treaty of General Guarantee and Defensive Alliance, the reciprocal support to be afforded when either of the contracting parties is called upon by the

* The substance of which is given in the beginning of this despatch.

other, is unlimited, and the engagements are for ever, not to cease at the expiration of a certain number of years, like those the Empress has made with Prussia and Denmark.

This important negotiation was terminated about a week after Count Cobenzel sent away his last Messenger (the 15th or 16th of June), but the whole was conducted with such impenetrable secrecy, that no trace of its being settled transpired. I remained for some time under the same error my colleagues still labour under, and my intelligence of the Ministerial answers sent from hence (the only ones the Austrian Messenger carried) was clear and positive. I was certain that in my reports of what they contained, I was not deceiving your Lordship, and my suspicions first arose from the air of satisfaction and content I perceived in the Empress, and which I was convinced she could not put on if she had been disappointed in a favourite project. From that moment I did everything in my power to get at the truth, and, after infinite pains, obtained only a few days ago the important information I now have the pleasure of transmitting to your Lordship. From what I can discover it is known to no one here but the Empress and Mons. Besberodko, for, though I presume my friend is not ignorant of the transaction, yet he does not betray to me any symptoms of his being acquainted with it; and I am certain that neither the Vice-Chancellor, or any of the foreign department is trusted with it. They all say to their intimates that the Negotiation is broken off from the point of etiquette, and such is the general opinion here, both amongst the Russians and strangers.

I need not observe to your Lordship that this complaisance of the Emperor has raised the Empress's predilection for him to the highest pitch; that she will now go any lengths he chooses to lead her, and it may fairly

be supposed that His Imperial Majesty would not have been so complaisant, if he had not in view the making a very good use of his influence here. Your Lordship will best know how to take advantage of these circumstances. The two Imperial Sovereigns may be infinitely serviceable to us, but their good-will is to be purchased by very different attentions. The Emperor will listen to anything that may tend to the advancement and security of his empire; to propositions which might acquire him solid advantages and true glory: in a word, to the language of wisdom and sound policy. But the character of the great Lady near whom I have the honour of residing, is of a different cast. To please her, we must perpetually offer sacrifices to her vanity, avoid contradicting her opinions, affect to approve what she proposes, to admire her capacity, to respect her greatness, to place an equal confidence in her ability and in her inclination to assist us; and, by giving her credit for those eminent qualities she thinks she possesses, make her act as if she really possessed them.

I am convinced, from my own feelings, it is as painful and arduous a task for an English Minister to conform to these principles, as it is easy for him to adopt those necessary to conciliate the friendship of the Emperor; but it is my duty to give a faithful picture of the temper and complexion of the Court I am at.

EXTRACTS OF DESPATCHES FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Friday, 25th June, 6th July, 1781.

THE fluctuating history of this Court affords new matter for every messenger I despatch; it never was more extraordinary than at the present moment. The Empress

grows every day more suspicious and hasty; tenacious to a degree of her own power, and obstinately attached to her own opinion, she is jealous or displeased with almost every one that approaches her. From being the most easy and pleasing Mistress to serve, she is become the most difficult, and her domestics, as well as her ministers and favourites, feel this singular change in her disposition. It makes itself so sensibly felt, that several of the leading people of the State have asked, or mean to ask, their dismission from their offices. General Sievers, governor of several provinces, a man of great fidelity and talents, has actually obtained his: the Marshal Gallitzin, likewise, has repeatedly solicited leave to retire, and I am assured that Mons. Betzkoy has the same intention. My friend, too, who is more exposed to the effects of this revolution in her temper than any one, has, I have good reason to believe, expressed to her his earnest desire of throwing up his many employments, and it was not till he received the flattest refusal, that he desisted from his solicitations. I am, however, very far from believing that he was in earnest in forming this request, and that, knowing the impossibility of the Empress's doing without him, he made it with a view, if possible, of recovering his influence over her, which, for some time past, has to me visibly diminished, and in which, if he has failed (for I think it still in a state of decline), he has completely succeeded in another point, (not less interesting to him,) by having induced her to purchase of him for Landskoy, (who seems to be now reinstated in favour,) a considerable estate, for a sum not less than 500,000 roubles; and indeed, if anything could make me suppose he had it in contemplation to leave the Court, it is the loads of ready money he is heaping up, by selling his estates, horses, and jewels, and which looks as if he either wished, or was

apprehensive he should be forced to retire, and that it was wise to place in time a large capital in some foreign funds.

He is to me most perfectly friendly and cordial, and assures me that whenever he can, he will serve me, and that, in the meanwhile, he is free to confess that it is not in his power, either to direct his Sovereign's conduct, or to prevent her from being imposed on by false representations. I should not do him justice if I was not to say that I believe him perfectly sincere, and that he has never deceived me, or withheld from me any secrets he was not enjoined by the Empress to keep. I in some measure partake of his fate, and, for some time past, I have remarked a very material change in the Empress's behaviour towards me, particularly since my conference with her in November, when I have reason to believe, she was displeased with the freedom I made use of.

The person who has now the greatest weight, and of whose rising interests every one is jealous, is Mr. Besberodko; and, by conforming to all her humours, he has gained her confidence and good opinion, and from his excellents parts and uncommon memory, he is particularly useful to her. It is he that almost solely directs the interior government of the empire, and he has also a very considerable share in the conduct of foreign affairs.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 25th June, 6th July, 1781.

I obtained the information of the conclusion of the Treaty* from the confidential Secretary of Mons. Bes-

* Between the two Imperial Courts.

berodko. I trust I shall keep him to myself, since I have lost almost all my other informers by being outbid for them by the French and Prussians. This is the more painful to me, as I am convinced that I appear very profuse in the article of Secret Service money, and that His Majesty has every reason to expect such services as he receives from me at a much cheaper rate; but the increasing and avid corruption of this Court is not to be conceived; and my enemies, not only because they divide the expense amongst them, but because their respective Courts pour in money upon them, have a great advantage over me. They are also much more adroit at this dirty business than I am, who cannot help despising the person I corrupt.

The King of Prussia, from an exact information I have obtained from his Consul's accounts, has sent Count Goertz not less than 30,000 ducats since October. I cannot so accurately ascertain the sums the French and Spaniards have expended (for they bribe in common), but, from every circumstance, believe them to be still greater. The Dutch, too, have contributed their mite, though theirs is a very small contingent. These sums are so considerable, that I am convinced they are bestowed on people above the rank of subaltern; Count C * * * is, beyond a doubt, one of the number, and I have the strongest reason to suspect Mr. B * * * and Madame R * * *, and even the V * * * * * himself.

Your Lordship will be pleased to give me your orders how you would choose me to act. It is disgraceful to the Court I am at, that I am able to write so long a letter on such a subject; but I feel the necessity of entering into it more fully than I have hitherto done, lest I should draw on myself the imputation of profuseness and wanton expense of the public money.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT M. KEITH, VIENNA.

Pètersburg, June 25th, July 6th, 1781.

It is in the greatest confidence, and under the seal of the most profound secrecy, that I inform you that the Treaty between the two Imperial Courts is signed by letter by the two Sovereigns. It was executed nearly about the 15th of June, new style, and returned to Vienna by the last courier from hence. It is known to no one here, and I must entreat of you, though you will of course regulate your political conduct in consequence of it, not to betray any sign of being acquainted with it. On speaking of it to me even in cipher, use obscure terms. I am most anxious to learn from you what can be the Emperor's views on having such a very singular and unexpected complaisance for the Empress. She is now, I may say, passionately attached to him, and the Prussian interest is fallen for ever.

The Grand-Duke's journey is a singular event. He has orders not to pass, either going or returning, through any part of the Prussian territories. The knowledge of this important fact is the reason of my despatching this messenger.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 6th, 17th July, 1781.

The Empress, on reading the several papers I delivered to the Vice-Chancellor on Thursday, expressed more concern than surprise or displeasure. She lamented all her efforts to make Peace had hitherto been fruitless, and

observed, that till she had taken the sense of Her Imperial Colleague, and was acquainted with the answers of the Bourbon Courts, it was not in her power to make any fresh suggestions on this delicate subject.* Though thus moderate in her language, yet it evidently appeared that she was not satisfied with our refusal, and she frequently insinuated that we were an untractable and haughty nation.

Her confidence in the Emperor increases daily; her predilection for him goes even to enthusiasm, and if he means us well, all will go right; if he does not, I see no hopes of gaining this Court. It is as impossible now to act here against his influence as it was two years ago against that of the King of Prussia. It will, however, be singularly untoward that we should equally suffer by the prevailing interests of two opposite parties, and I shall feel myself singularly unfortunate if, in my attempts to sink those of Potzdam and raise those of Austria, I have done nothing more than change the name of my opponents.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Wednesday, 14th, 25th July, 1781.

YOUR Lordship will perceive that Her Imperial Majesty returns to her favourite idea of re-establishing peace between Great Britain and Holland with redoubled force.

* The proposal of the Mediating Powers was, that an Armistice should be signed for a year, during which all hostilities were to be suspended and peace negotiated. The American Colonies were to be admitted to this proposal, and no Treaty of Peace was to be signed without their being included.

Lord Stormont, June 12th, informs Sir J. Harris, that Great Britain declined the proposed plan of Mediation, refusing the intervention of any power between herself and her Colonies, and pointing out that in the present state of the struggle in America a suspension of hostilities would be fatal to the success of His Majesty's arms.

I have repeatedly said to your Lordship, that since my arrival, though I have often seen her out of humour, I never knew her so thoroughly displeased as when she received our answer declining her offers of Intervention between us and the Dutch. It was a plan she had conceived herself, and communicated no part of it to Count Panin.

By degrees, however, the ill-humour wore off, and the motives of her displeasure were nearly forgotten, when our answer to the general Mediation arrived. As this, however, was not her own work, and as, on the whole (notwithstanding what she has ordered her Ministers to say to me), I have good reason to believe she admires our spirit and firmness, it did not by any means give her the same unfavourable feelings.

She was sorry, indeed, not to have the glory of making a general peace; but her mind was made up to a refusal, as from an early period of the business she thought the Mediation would prove abortive, and has more than once been heard to say, that matters were not yet ripe for settling the disputes between England and France: as, however, during this interval, and particularly since the refusal of succours from the Northern League has increased the fermentation in Holland, the Ambassador of that Republic here has renewed his applications for assistance in the most urgent and even suppliant manner; and as now the moment of a general pacification is removed to a distant day, she has taken up again the idea of making a separate Peace between us and Holland with greater warmth than ever, and has ordered, as your Lordship sees in my first letter of this date, the Vice-Chancellor to speak to me in the strongest manner on this subject. That Minister, I am convinced, added nothing of his own; and however zealous a partisan he

may be of the Dutch, he has not said more to me than what he was enjoined by his Sovereign to say. I am confirmed in what I say both by Prince Potemkin and Mr. Besberodko, with both of whom I have had very long conversations on this subject. The Prince sees, in as strong lights as your Lordship or any of His Majesty's Ministers, the many inconveniences attending a *distinct* negotiation with Holland, and agrees with me in the almost impossibility of its ever being attended with success; yet he assures me, so strongly is the Empress bent on trying its effects, that he will not be responsible for the extremities to which she may go if we continue to decline the tender of her good offices. "Elle s'est piquée au jeu," was his expression, "et croit son honneur interessé à donner la paix aux Hollandois." After going into very curious details relative to her character and temper (which will better find a place in a separate letter), he said that it was his advice that we should accept her offer.

I told him very freely, that though I certainly would communicate to your Lordship every word of what he said, and though I could assure him beforehand that the friendly manner in which he acted would entitle him to great gratitude from us, yet we had lately received so many proofs of the Empress's indifference for us, and her actions kept so little pace with her professions, that I much doubted whether it would be in my power to prevail on my Court to agree to the ideas he proposes.

However essential it might appear for His Majesty to be informed, without loss of time, of what the Russian Minister said to me, relative to our war with Holland, I should have been very unwilling to despatch Roworth before the answers of the Bourbon Courts to the preliminary proposals were received here, if I had not

already exhausted that subject in several conferences with my friend, and with Mr. Besberodko, and obtained from them concerning it every information I ever must hope to collect.

From their conversation, I am confirmed in what I wrote your Lordship, that these proposals were conceived and executed at Vienna; that the Empress had from the beginning entrusted it to the Austrian Minister, to devise the most likely means of opening the Congress with an appearance of success; and from that moment, though every step since taken was regularly communicated to her, yet she never required to be previously consulted. Such an implicit faith from a person of her character, in a minister whom she is by no means partial to, sufficiently denoted her indifference for the event of the Mediation, and the little pains she took to compare the proposals Prince Kaunitz sent with the spirit and clear meaning of our repeated declarations on the subject of peace, as evidently prove that she is much less interested in our real welfare and glory than she so often has professed to be.

It should, indeed, appear also from the conversation of these gentlemen, that her indifference for the event of the Mediation took place the instant we gave her an adjoint in that great work, and that she designedly made over to her colleague the conducting this business, to be able, if it failed, to say it was not her fault, and that if she had been left to herself she would have done better.

This your Lordship will find conformable to all I have written, and perfectly analogous to her character in general. I was more free in speaking to Prince Potemkin. Before I was in possession of the several papers Roworth brought me, I had foretold him their contents; and though, till I was instructed from your Lordship, I could not speak officially, I had prepared him, as far as lay in my

power, for what I well knew I should be ordered to say. He could not, therefore, be surprised, either at our refusal of these propositions, or to hear that we did not expect, after the very friendly and confidential communication we had made her, ever to see similar ones approved by the Empress.

Prince Potemkin answered me to this effect: "the alteration you lament with so much reason," said he, "was not produced by the intrigues of France or Spain; neither had they, any more than your concealed adversaries, any share in this work; you must look for the cause in the personal character of the Empress: she deceives both you and herself. The specious reason she gives is, that she does not find in you that confidence you professed having, and which she thinks she deserves. That you oppose her plans, decline her offers, and that you solicit acts of friendship without affording any." As I was here going to reply, he stopped me by saying, "I know all you have to suggest; I know it, and acknowledge the truth of it, and can assure you, with the greatest sincerity, that I have made use of every argument you can produce to convince the Empress of the injustice she does you; and at the bottom," added he, "she is convinced, but she hides it even from herself, and will not own that she is deterred on this occasion, as on all others which require vigorous exertions, by *timidity*. Apprehensions of being involved in the war get the better of every other idea; and she would rather give way to the little passions which debase her mind, and find in them an excuse for being inconsistent and inattentive to the greatest advantages, than expose herself to the possible risks which might attend a spirited, resolute, and systematic conduct. This pusillanimity," said he, "will account for several parts of her behaviour, and it increases with age."

This, my Lord, is all the information I have been able to obtain on what has passed here, since the first idea of a joint Mediation has subsisted.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 14th, 25th July, 1781.

My Lord,—Prince Potemkin, in some of the late conversations I have had with him, spoke of the Empress in freer terms than he ever used before. He often had accused her of levity, of a perpetual altering her opinion, and never acting up to a system; and, indeed, so many proofs of this appear in the course of my correspondence, that his authority was not necessary to constitute the veracity of the fact. He now, however, made no scruple of saying that increase of years by degrees destroyed all her great qualities; that she was become suspicious, timid, and narrow-minded; that in all great objects which were held out to her, she suspected some deep selfish design in him who proposed them; or if she supposed him sincere, she saw only the peril, not the glory attending the attempt; that her ambition disappeared before the most remote probability of risk; and that she was sensible to nothing but the flattery of the hour, because it was obtained without danger. "It was for this reason," said he, "that she declined the very advantageous offer you made her last February, of a cession of the Isle of Minorca, a possession," added the Prince, "she would have purchased a few years ago by lending you the whole force of her empire, if you had required it; and," added he, emphatically, "what have you to fear from her, even suppose she meant you ill? when now she has not spirit enough to accept it, when it was given her for nothing,

and when, instead of acknowledging the generosity of the offer, she thought it was a snare to draw her into the war? Be sure," continued he, "that nothing will induce her to be your avowed enemy, or your avowed friend. He that knows best how to please her will have the appearance of her friendship; and in this," he said, "though, from her predilection for your nation, you have an easier game to play than your enemies, yet they are more adroit than you are. The Emperor, however, is still more adroit than they; and unless the King of Prussia finds out some very extraordinary means of counteracting him, he will gradually lead her any lengths he pleases; and," exclaimed my friend, with uncommon warmth, "the greatest blessing that could befall this empire, and the only event which could restore the Empress to a due sense of her feelings, is a *Turkish war*.* This would make her know the limits of her power, and save us from those great calamities which a few years' perseverance in her present unsettled and erroneous state of political conduct would undoubtedly bring down on the Russian empire. Cultivate, therefore," subjoined he, "on one side the good-will of the Emperor: it is through him alone you can get at the Empress; on the other, do everything you possibly can to please her. Never contradict her, in the first instance; affect to accept her offers, to follow her councils; and if her offers and councils are incompatible with your interests, or contrary to your opinions, wait an opportunity, in the course of business, of imperceptibly deviating from them. I am reduced," ended he, "to give you advice, for I cannot give you assistance; and recommend to your

* This throughout had been Potemkin's great object, and was the present bond of sympathy between him and the Empress. It is the solution of many of their acts which were for some time unintelligible to Sir James Harris.

Ministry to follow it, and I am sure they will find their account in it." Such was the very confidential, and, I may say, extraordinary language of my friend; and what he says is so strongly confirmed by everything I have related that I am satisfied that on the whole he speaks truth.

I see little probability of Count Panin ever returning to business; but till it is publicly known in Europe that he does not, we shall not feel the good effects of his dismission. He talks of returning here to assist at the Inoculation of the young princes; the Empress is displeased at the idea, and said with anger, that she did not see what Count Panin had to do on this occasion; that he ever acted as if he was one of her family, and as if her children and grandchildren belonged to him as much as to her. "But," added she, "if he thinks ever to be reinstated in his post of First Minister, he is greatly deceived. *Il ne sera jamais à ma cour autre chose que garde malade.*" It would be extraordinary if, after this strong sarcasm, he should be reinstated; but it is not impossible, and I never believe anything here till it has actually taken place.

It is from facts like these that your Lordship must collect the character of this Court. It is impossible for me to send you a picture of it, that would not, before it got to your hands, totally lose its likeness; and it is not to be wondered that its operations and conduct are so incomprehensible to your Lordship, when I, who am on the spot, and whose attention is turned on that single object, am in a perpetual puzzle, and never when I go to bed can venture to say what will be the humour and intention of the Empress when I rise; on the whole, however, I think I may safely say, there is no motive for real alarm, and that if we continue to humour her, and

can make a friend of the Emperor, we may still, in time, draw even good from hence.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Wednesday 14th, 25th July, 1781.

If the friendship of this Empress is worth having we must gratify her in the proposal* she now makes us; a refusal may operate very powerfully on her irritable character, and with however potent and conclusive reasonings it might be accompanied, they would carry no conviction to a mind like hers. It is not impossible, that it might provoke her even to join our enemies, and I am certain it would destroy the small remnant of good-will she bears us, and would throw all her influence into their scale.

I see, in as forcible a light as your Lordship can, the many very great objections to enter into a separate negotiation with Holland, and the various inconveniences which must necessarily attend either its success or its failure, and will not conceal from you, that when first the Vice-Chancellor made the proposition to me, that I endeavoured by every possible means to fling cold water on the idea. I referred him to the several answers we had already given on this subject; I observed that the reasoning contained in them was clear, explicit, and unanswerable; that they still held good, and that whether the day for treating for a general peace was to take place directly, or whether it was put off to a distant period, till it arrived I did not see any opening for entering into a *distinct* negotiation

* Of a Separate Mediation between England and Holland.

with the Dutch. I said all this, my Lord, and much more to the same purpose, to discourage, if possible, the coming forward of the proposition, but the Vice-Chancellor entreated me so earnestly not to hold a language which would oblige him to tell the Empress, that I was pre-instructed to decline her offer, and assured me so positively, if I did, to make use of his own words, "*que vous vous en repentirez*," that I consented to make use of vague expressions only, and promised him to insert no others in any official accounts I should make to your Lordship of our conference on this subject.

I would willingly have spared you, my Lord, the unpleasant task of receiving and replying to the dangerous whims of this singular Court, and should not have hesitated drawing down on myself, (could I have effected it,) the Empress's displeasure, if it had been to be felt by myself alone. But it was not in my power; the proposition would have come through Mr. Simolin, if it had not come through me, and it would then have certainly been couched in less friendly words than those I received it in.

The matter now stands thus: whether it will be more agreeable in its consequences, entering into a separate negotiation with Holland, or, by declining it, running the risk of drawing down on us the united weight of the Northern League. I most sincerely wish we may find ourselves strong enough not to apprehend the latter; it would teach Europe a lesson she wants to learn, and I should have a most particular satisfaction in holding here that language it costs me now and then so much to smother; but if we are not, why then, my Lord, we must follow the advice of my friend,— separate her by distinct marks of confidence

from her confederates; begin by accepting her offer in express words, and afterwards propose the *only conditions* on which Peace can be made with the Republic. These will be such as, in the present state of phrenzy, it will scarcely receive; or, if it does, the negotiation may end to our wishes, or else it will be a work of time. Events may arise which may give another turn to affairs, and enable us to break it off.

I beg pardon, my Lord, for saying thus much, for suggesting ideas that naturally have suggested themselves to you; but I never felt myself in so trying a situation since I have lived abroad, and till I receive your answers, I shall be very apprehensive lest my conduct should not be approved. My zeal for His Majesty's service has abated nothing at this embarrassing moment, but I confess I am diffident of my abilities; and, though I think I have done right, I am not quite satisfied with what I have done.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO STANISLAUS, KING OF POLAND.

Petersburg, August 4th, 1781.

SIR,—The recollection of your Majesty's goodness towards me, at a time of life when I certainly owed it to the benevolence and affability of your disposition, and not to any merits of my own, induces me to believe that I may venture without incurring your displeasure, on expressing at this distant period my gratitude, particularly as I can do it through the channel of a person so nearly connected with me as my wife. The chief motive of her stopping at Warsaw is to pay her Court

to your Majesty; and Lady Harris and Sir Gilbert Elliot will think the fatigues of the journey well repaid, if they are admitted to this honour, and I shall be peculiarly happy to know that persons so dear to me, may not have appeared unworthy your Royal notice.

I am, Sir, with the most respectful submission, your Majesty's devoted and ever humble servant,

JAMES HARRIS.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO HUGH ELLIOT, ESQ., BERLIN.

Petersburg, 10th, 21st Aug., 1781.

MY DEAR SIR,—All that you say in your letter by your brother is perfectly conformable to what I learn and see here; I feel Count Goertz is more constant and more illiberal in his opposition to me than Verac; he makes it personal, not political: and from having universally failed in everything (except the accession to the Neutrality) he sought an excuse for his ill-success, by imputing it to "my intrigues." But no part of my conduct has deserved that name; I never deviated from the pursuit of those objects recommended to me by my own Court, not to interfere with the affairs of others, nor ever opposed their measures till they had begun opposing mine. When attacked I defended myself, and if in this I have succeeded, I shall be very indifferent whose good or ill will I may have drawn down upon me.

Did His Prussian Majesty see my conduct in its true light, he certainly would not disapprove it; and if his Minister here stated to him circumstances as they are, he would find that the decline of his interests at Petersburg

is not the consequence of intrigue, but that of sober reflection, and is a determined unalterable resolution in the Empress. This I am sure of, and if Goertz is not, he deceives both himself and his Master most egregiously. I am free to confess I have taken my share in endeavouring to sink it, because its existence here has done us more harm in the course of ten years than it could do us good, if His Prussian Majesty was to reign forty years longer, and employ the whole of them in our favour.

A LETTER FROM STANISLAUS, KING OF POLAND, TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

Warsaw, 3rd Sept., 1781.

DEAR SIR,—Your kind letter of the 4th August last has given me the agreeable certainty, that I preserve in your person a friend, which is so much more pleasing to me, as I maintain a true estime* and good-will for you.

You could not choose messengers more welcome to me than Mrs. Harris and Sir Gilbert Elliot. I hope both will testify with what pleasure and cordiality I have received the wife and relation of my good old friend.

Don't be offended at the epithet of *old*. I know I am your elder, (which I am heartily sorry for,) but by calling you my *old* friend I contrive to look, perhaps, somewhat younger myself; and so you must put up with me.

But, now in earnest, I wish you joy to such an amiable good-humoured consort. We are already as well ac-

* The errors like this one are preserved as in the original.

quainted as if I had known her these ten years. Sir Gilbert seems to me one of the most sensible and clever men I ever have seen.

I am sorry they will give us but so very few days to enjoy their truly agreeable company. But I know you desire they shall not tarry long, and so I let them go to-morrow, and all my good wishes and regrets along with them.

I am grieved they have found Warsaw void of people, nay, quite desert in this moment. Nevertheless, they have seen our good-will, to make them pass their short séjour the less tiresome possible.

I hope you will excuse my bad English; having no opportunity at all to speak that language, I am quite at a loss to find my words. Still I have thought, that to a true British subject, and particularly in time of a French war, English, though bad and broken, shall be more acceptable from a northern King than the nicest French *tournure*. And so God bless you, my good old friend.

S. R.

LETTER FROM LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

St. James's, Sept. 7th, 1781.

SIR,—You see that the resolution* taken is such as you desired; the turn of your despatches, backed by the weight of Prince Potemkin's opinion, greatly influenced the decision upon this difficult point; this one trial more is made to gain the friendship of the Empress of Russia by falling in with the passion of the day, yet the

* The English Government consented, by a despatch of the same date, to accept the Empress's separate Mediation between us and Holland.

very little success of all the former attempts might be sufficient to discredit any further trial.

It is a striking and melancholy truth, that whatever her intentions might have been at the outset, not a single step has been taken by her in the course of this war, that has not in the end proved highly prejudicial to this country. It is by no means improbable that this measure which she is now pursuing so eagerly, may have the same tendency; but, after attentively weighing all the circumstances, it is judged wisest, upon the whole, to make our stand upon these terms of peace, rather than upon any general reasoning against trying a negotiation which has always a harsh appearance when the object held out is a reconciliation with an old and natural ally.

Prince Potemkin's advice is followed in communicating to the Empress our ultimatum; the terms are fair and moderate, and we shall certainly stand upon them: if the Empress endeavours to drive us from that ground she will not succeed, *be the consequences what they may.* You will be particularly attentive to everything that can indicate her real intentions; I suspect them to be insidious, and am afraid we shall soon have indications of her partiality. However, without giving way to suspicions, we hazard the attempt rather than provoke by a refusal, and must trust to our own vigilance and firmness, to avoid every snare, and to conduct the negotiation with proper circumspection. I am so far from expecting any real advantage from it, that I heartily wish the proposal had never been made; but, in the shape in which it did come, nothing was left but the choice of difficulties, and after mature deliberation a selection has been made, which seemed least dangerous upon the whole. At the commencement of the war, we thought the Empress's seeming indifference to the

fate of it a serious evil, and endeavoured to rouse her into activity; in a natural and reasonable persuasion that if she did exert herself it would be in favour of Great Britain, on the continuance of whose prosperity that of her own empire so much depends — but the event has shown this reasoning to be erroneous; every step she has taken, every exertion she has made, has been of a nature that it has tended only to increase our difficulties, and make the war heavier upon us, and happy would it have been for this country if, like an Eastern Monarch, she had slept upon her throne.

I am, with great truth and regard,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

STORMONT.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 3rd, 14th September, 1781.

MY LORD,—A courier just arrived from Vienna, has, as I am informed, brought also from the Emperor, in consequence of what Count Cobenzel wrote from hence, a requisition to be admitted also to this Neutral League, and it is probable the acts necessary for this accession will be drawn up this week.

All this looks, my Lord, as if Her Imperial Majesty was determined to carry this strange yet favourite measure of hers into a permanent law at the Peace and to force it on such nations as may not be disposed to admit it. It is amazing that its *inutility* to Russia in time of peace, and the evident *distress* it must occasion

when she is at war, has not yet struck her: it is still more strange, that she does not perceive she has already expended more in support of this wild system, than she and all her northern neighbours could gain by it, even if it was to become eternal. I have left off attempting to argue on the subject, convinced that her perseverance is founded on the most obstinate error, and that arguments and plain reason, instead of slackening, will only draw the knot tighter.

The Emperor's admission gives infinite umbrage to the King of Prussia, and destroys that temporary triumph he enjoyed on his own accession. Count Cobenzel has communicated no part of this transaction to me, and persists in that shyness on political subjects I have already described to your Lordship. This has not made the smallest alteration in my behaviour towards him; but his towards me has been remarked by the Prussian Minister, and is, I believe, the sole cause of his having, for the last fortnight, appeared very desirous of being civil and attentive to me, under the supposition that, from my having room to be dissatisfied with Count Cobenzel, I may be induced to open myself more freely to him. In this, however, he will not succeed, till his Master observes a line of conduct very different from that he is now pursuing.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Friday, 7th, 18th September, 1781.

On Thursday last, 2nd September, O. S., the Vice-Chancellor received an order signed by the Empress, that it was her pleasure that he should do alone all the business of the Foreign Department; that all acts and

rescripts relative to it should be signed by him; that he should report to her what the Foreign Ministers said to him, and his answers to them; that the foreign correspondence should be addressed to him, and the answers written in his name alone.

This very singular and humiliating exclusion of Count Panin, was resolved on by the Empress about a week ago, but she kept her resolution secret till his arrival, making it, if possible, by this means, still more disgraceful for him. As it was quite unexpected here, and as most people supposed Count Panin too artful and too well informed a man to return to certain disgrace and shame, it has caused a very considerable sensation; and, as a very large number of dependants are included in his overthrow, there is as much murmuring as can be ventured to be shewn in a Government like this. He himself is dejected to a degree: and, besides the loss of power and influence, feels, in the most poignant manner, the ill-advised step he has taken, in leaving for the country. He taxes his relations and friends he left here with having misinformed him; accuses them of inattention and ingratitude towards him, and his placid temper in private has entirely forsaken him.

I had yesterday much conversation with my friend on this subject. He affects to disapprove the harshness of the measure, though he admits the equity of it. He assured me, that he believes *what I said* to the Empress herself in March last was the *first cause of it*, since from that moment she had sought and found very sufficient proofs of the veracity of what I had advanced to her. He advised me, however, to keep up an appearance of living perfectly well with Count Panin, and (what I certainly shall do) to avoid any expression of triumph or of insult at his disgrace: he added, (and his words made a

deep impression on me,) "You know the fickleness of this Court; he may be restored to his places, and if you treat him with attention during his disgrace, he will then be ashamed to act against you in so glaring a manner as he has hitherto done." I told him that I should undoubtedly conform to what he said, but observed, that unless he himself took him up, I saw no possibility of his ever recovering this stroke. Prince Potemkin laughed at the idea of Count Panin's being supported by him, and, as a proof of the contrary, assured me that he had reported word for word the last conversation I had with him to the Empress on the subject of Count Panin, and that *this had fixed her resolution*, which, till then, was wavering. I am indeed convinced he does not love Count Panin, and that he was originally instrumental to his disgrace; but he loves Mons. Besberodko and his set still less, and sees, with the greatest jealousy and uneasiness, the progress they make. My fears all along have been, and still are, that he will endeavour to raise Count Panin in order to sink them; and that, to answer the purposes of a dark Court intrigue, he will forget the more essential interests of his friends.

September 10.

Count Panin seems to have a little recovered his spirits. I passed the evening yesterday with him, and found him much more composed than when I had last seen him.

He directs the whole force of his intrigues at the Grand Duke and Duchess, and will spare no pains to persuade them that, by going to Vienna, they are paying a visit to their most dangerous enemy.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 17th, 28th Sept., 1781.

My Lord,—Count Panin, by a very artful and insidious conduct, had gone very near to overthrow entirely the Grand-Duke's journey, and to re-establish his own power and influence. He had contrived so far to affect the Grand-Duchess, that she declared positively that nothing should induce her to leave her children.

Sunday and Monday everything was in a state of confusion, and the Court afforded a very singular scene of fermentation and disorder. I heard of it Tuesday, and went Wednesday to Czarsco Zelo, where I found my friend partaking very strongly of the general agitation, and, what I never knew him before, almost despondent. He endeavoured to conceal his situation from me, but, on perceiving that I was very accurately informed of what was going forward, he threw off his reserve, and spoke to me freely: I was as free in my turn, and after giving him better and more minute intelligence of the intrigues Count Panin was employing, of the means he had made use of, and of the object he had in view, than any he had before received, I enlarged very forcibly on the absolute necessity of not permitting the smallest alteration in the journey, and set in such strong colours the fatal consequences that would attend a want of becoming firmness and spirit at this moment, and that nothing less than his perdition and a total change of system would follow it, that I roused him to activity.

He went while I was there to the Empress, and before my departure, the journey which had literally been put off to a long day, was now fixed to Sunday (the day after to-morrow), and their Imperial Highnesses were obliged,

very reluctantly, to have a Court on Wednesday evening to take leave. Having effected this, I went still further, and urged the necessity of putting it out of the power of so dangerous a man as Count Panin of again making a similar attempt, and unless he has supernatural assistance, I can venture to premise that he will, in a very short time, either receive an order to return to his estates, or else be deprived of every possible means of doing harm.

The nature of a ciphered letter will not allow me to give a more circumstantial account of what has passed. I never knew a more dangerous crisis,* nor ever was in a situation to make such painful and even dangerous exertions. I shall, by the first messenger, explain the whole to your Lordship; in the meanwhile, no evil can arise from the delay, as the storm is blown over, and good, rather than harm, been the result of it. I am sorry to say, that on this occasion I had very little assistance from my colleague Count Cobenzel, though he was more immediately concerned in the event than myself. On my first acquainting him with the danger, he was flung into a state of surprise and astonishment, out of which he did not recover till it was all ended.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, Tuesday, 21st Sept., 2nd Oct., 1781.

SUNDAY evening, about half-past five, their Imperial Highnesses the Grand Duke and Duchess left Czarsco Zelo. Their suite was composed of about sixty persons, and while in this empire, they will, at each post, employ about two hundred and forty horses. On leaving

* More fully explained in a subsequent despatch dated November 1.

it, the number of their attendants will be exceedingly diminished.

I had a person employed to observe what passed at Czarsco Zelo till the moment of the departure. It is impossible to express the agitation of the Grand-Duchess. On taking leave of her children she fainted away, and was carried speechless into her coach. She attempted to say something to the Empress, but her voice failed her, and her whole deportment and manner was of a person not about to undertake voluntarily an agreeable and instructive journey, but as one condemned to banishment. The Grand-Duke was nearly in the same state. On getting into the carriage, he drew up the blinds, and bid the coachman drive away as fast as possible.

Prince Orlow, Prince Potemkin, Count Panin, and most of the principal people of the Court, waited on them to the coach. The last of these was nearest to the Grand-Duke when he got into it, and whispered a few words in his ear, to which he received no reply. The Empress, who had accompanied them to the antechamber of her apartment, was a good deal discomposed, and, on leaving them, went directly to her grand-children. There is not the smallest doubt that this very uncommon sensibility in their Imperial Highnesses does not arise solely from quitting their children. Count Panin has filled their heads with apprehensions, and they are gone away under the strongest impressions of terror. He plays a very deep stake; as he may be assured, the Empress is not unacquainted with the part he has acted, and will not leave such a conduct unnoticed. She treated him on Sunday with the most marked contempt, and her behaviour had such an effect on him, as to create a visible discomposure on his placid and unchanging countenance. Everything which has since happened tends to make me believe that

what I said in my last must soon take place, and the Empress's tranquillity, perhaps even her security, seem to depend on the removing a man who can have recourse to such violent extremities.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO —— LISTON, ESQ., BERLIN.

Petersburg, 3rd, 14th Oct., 1781.

I CAN pretty readily account for the revolutions in the King of Prussia's temper, from what I see here. He wishes to preserve at least an appearance of being still well, and the Empress continually proves the contrary by overt acts of partiality and predilection in favour of the Emperor. Be assured that the connexion between this Court and that of Vienna is as strong as the most explicit Treaty of Alliance could make it; that the influence of years is fallen to the ground, and that all Count Goertz can now effect is, evil to others, not good to his Master. He has fought a good fight, and raised every possible obstacle in the way of his opponents he could, but he had to struggle against a very powerful adversary—the sudden impression of admiration on a female mind. This weighed down everything, and neither habitual complaisance nor the indefatigable perseverance of Count Goertz, could support a cause which was now become obnoxious to the Empress. I wish I could say we derived any good from this revolution of principles; hitherto, we stand in the same position we have been in for these last two years, great professions and no effect; a desire existing to serve us, but a want of resolution; and what is worse than all, a disposition to listen to mis-

representations, and to hear harm rather than good. To this may be added, and we may thank your Old Gentleman for it, a true spirit of Opposition, a dislike to Administration, and an opinion of our Sovereign very different from what he is.

DESPATCH FROM LORD STORMONT TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

St. James's, Oct. 30th, 1781.

SIR,—Your very interesting despatch met the fullest approbation. No Foreign Minister could be in a more trying and difficult situation than your's was during this extraordinary crisis; it has afforded you an opportunity of displaying uncommon zeal, abilities, and address, and the success with which those endeavours have been crowned, must have given pleasure to any man who wishes the prosperity of the Empress. It is not to be supposed that after such a discovery* the Empress will suffer him to remain with so much as a remnant of power; if she does, that power will greatly increase till it overbears that of the Empress herself, and enable him to complete the most daring and desperate designs. The little assistance you met with in your colleague in a business where the interests of his Court are so materially concerned, seems to shew an unfavourable disposition; but if fully examined, rather proves, with all his talents, that he is not equal to the very difficult situations which arise in so very singular a scene, and in that light his conduct forms a very strong contrast with your's.

I am, with great truth and regard, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

STORMONT.

* Count Panin's intrigues with her children.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 21st Oct., 1st Nov., 1781.

My Lord,—I have ever been apprehensive I should have appeared profuse in my expenditure of secret service money. When the late Lord Suffolk afforded me a discretionary power to dispose of it, I then declined it, flattering myself that, having passed three years in Spain, and five at Berlin, with a tolerable degree of success and reputation, without having had recourse to a practice repugnant to my character, I should likewise have been able, (particularly as I was at what I thought a *friendly* Court,) to have gone on here on the same footing.

I, however, soon discovered my error; I found the intelligence I obtained imperfect or false; that I could conciliate to myself no dependants; *that I was surrounded by spies, and had none;* and that, instead of getting at the secret of others, I was in danger of being betrayed myself. I felt I should be reduced to the unpleasant dilemma of sending very unimportant intelligence if I made use of small sums, or of being taxed with extravagance if I made use of more considerable ones; in both cases, that I should be exposed to censure. Of these two evils I chose the least, because my being disapproved could be of consequence to myself alone, while a deficiency of authentic intelligence might very essentially affect His Majesty's service.

The entire sum shall be provided for out of my private fortune, if the Treasury, under the pretext of its being unreasonable, should disavow the permission I have received from your Lordship.

But I serve a gracious and indulgent Master, who, I am sure, would not wish to recompense my faithful services for fourteen years by distressing a fortune my

foreign life has already so considerably reduced.* I recognise the truth of what your Lordship says in your despatch I am now answering, and am well aware that there is a very material difference between the price to be paid for information, or for a real assistance; but while our enemies have those facilities your Lordship mentions, and pay information so very dear as they do here, I never must expect to get it cheap; nor will those who can give it ever take into consideration the different nature of our Government from that of all others. I could quote to your Lordship such incredible sums that the French have bestowed here, and those on people in so very inferior situations, and for such seemingly unimportant secrets, that your Lordship would not be surprised at those I am compelled to offer.

[Sir James Harris in a private letter says, that no person in his household was too insignificant to escape the temptation of a bribe from his opponents, to obtain a sight of his papers, or the temporary possession of his keys, and that when he left his secretary writing, he used to lock him up, not from mistrust of his honesty, but of his leaving the door of the room open.]

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 21st Oct., 1st Nov., 1781.

THE conduct of this Court, or rather of the Empress and her favourite, appears so notorious, that I feel it will

* In a private letter to Mr. Fox he says, that the emoluments of his profession are so much below its necessities, that he has sunk 20,000*l* of his private fortune since he entered it.

be difficult even for the most candid mind not to charge me with having been grossly deceived by one or both of them. If it is by *her*, I have to plead *that treaties and all other public acts have not a stronger guarantee of their validity than that I received—a Sovereign's word of honour*; if by him, that it was necessary to open the secret to some one, and that I could not apparently choose a properer person than one who enjoyed his Sovereign's entire confidence, who professed himself my bosom friend, and whose glory and interest seemed to be closely connected with the success of the proposition I made;* I therefore trust the very unfortunate turn it has taken will be as little imputed to indiscretion or imprudence in me, as it will to a want of zeal and affection for the service. After what I have written, your Lordship will not expect to hear that I have obtained any satisfactory information from my friend, or that I have prevailed on him to state this very important matter in its true light to the Empress. Your Lordship is too much used to sudden changes of sentiment here to be surprised at anything. I am satisfied, however, that it will be a matter of equal astonishment and concern to you, to hear that the only person who has prevented the Empress from dismissing Count Panin from her service entirely, and ordering him to leave Petersburg, is Prince Potemkin. This is the more extraordinary, as the getting rid of this Minister, to my certain knowledge, has been the first object of his wishes ever since I have known him; and, as your Lordship will see by mine, of Sept. 28th, that in the last struggle Count Panin made to recover his interests, the blow was principally

* The cession of Minorca. The secret was betrayed by the Empress herself to the Emperor of Austria, who made a merit to him of having refused it.—*Harris Papers.*

aimed at Prince Potemkin. I am too certain of what I write to be afraid of misleading your Lordship. My friend not only has prevented his complete disgrace, but is at this moment in secret intelligence with him. Mons. Falasin, a creature of Count Panin, and Mr. Van Vyson, a Secretary in the Foreign Department, are the go-betweens, and they execute their commissions in the most private manner possible. What passes is an impenetrable secret; but I am induced to believe it relates to some deep Court intrigue, in which my friend seems to have two objects, one to diminish the growing influence of Mons. Besberodko and his party, which he, perhaps, considers as more formidable than that of Count Panin; the other, of ingratiating himself, while it is time, with the Grand-Duke.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 21st Oct., 1st Nov., 1781.

I HAVE, in different parts of my correspondence during these last four months, mentioned to your Lordship the motives which gave rise to the Grand-Duke's journey, the means which were employed to induce him to undertake it, the various preparations previous to his departure, and, lastly, the difficulties which were started at the very moment this event was about to take place. I shall now set the whole before your Lordship's eyes in one despatch; and, though I shall be obliged in some measure to repeat what I have already written, yet I think it will not be uninteresting to His Majesty to see at one view the history of a measure which may tend so much to illustrate the political sentiments of Her Imperial Ma-

jesty, and which so strongly characterize the temper and complexion of her Court.

There is every reason to believe this journey was suggested by the Emperor, when he was here last year, and agreed on between him and the Empress at the same time as the marriage of the Archduke Francis; and I am now inclined to believe its sole object was to lay the foundation for a lasting union between the Courts of Vienna and Petersburg, to insure the duration of a work the Empress had begun, to loosen that very strong hold the King of Prussia and his dependants had on the young Court, to conquer the habitual partiality and predilection they have for this Monarch, and to substitute very different sentiments in their place. It was, however, kept a most profound secret, and not a trace of such an idea being in contemplation transpired till early in the summer of this year. Her Imperial Majesty, who was perfectly acquainted with the suspicious character of her successor, and of the adverse disposition of those by whom he is surrounded, was well aware, that if the proposition came directly from her, or from any of those in whom she places her confidence, that doubts and misgivings would not only present themselves to him, but be instigated and encouraged by those who influence his conduct and opinions. She, therefore, by the advice and through Prince Potemkin, opened herself to Prince Repnin, nephew to Count Panin, and who enjoyed a very great share of the Grand-Duke's esteem, and, concealing from him her real motive and designs, told him that for the sake of his acquiring knowledge and experience, and in order to get rid of several prejudices he had contracted, she had it greatly at heart that her son should travel; but not choosing to propose herself to him any-

thing which might be interpreted as a desire in her to absent him from her presence, she wished much that it should be a spontaneous request of his own, and required of Prince Repnin, (of whose cleverness and abilities she had received such proofs, and of whose fidelity she had no doubt,) to bring this to bear, by impressing both the Grand Duke and Duchess with the idea not only of the propriety, but of the necessity, born to a rank like theirs, of seeing the different characters of mankind and the various forms of Governments. She ended by promising Prince Repnin, if he succeeded, some very distinguished mark of her favour; and I should have premised that, previous to giving him this commission, she had, from a very trifling motive, affected to be extremely displeased with him, and the above-mentioned reward and a return to favour, were the terms promised him in case of success.

Prince Repnin executed his orders very ably; by talking continually of foreign countries, and of the many advantages to be acquired by visiting them, he raised in the Grand-Duke an eager desire of travelling, and a still stronger one in the Grand-Duchess. It became the first object of their wishes, and they were perpetually lamenting the impossibility of its taking place. While they were in this disposition of mind they received letters from the Emperor, with a pressing invitation to come to Vienna; that he would engage the Grand-Duchess's mother and other relations to meet her there, and that he was certain the Empress, if they would ask it, would not refuse them their request. Count Panin was consulted, and as Prince Repnin had been very faithful in keeping the Empress's secret, they did not meet that opposition from him they expected. Indeed, it immediately occurred to him to turn this journey to the advantage of

the King of Prussia, and to make Berlin, not Vienna, the principal object. Their Imperial Highnesses, therefore, about the 15th of June, waited on the Empress, and with much agitation, and under the apprehension of a refusal, made their request. The Empress, on her side, received it with a countenance of surprise and uneasiness; told them they had embarrassed her greatly by putting her in a situation where, either by granting what they asked, she must deprive herself for so long a time of their society, or by declining it, check in them a thirst after knowledge and instruction she could not but approve. After a good deal of conversation, in which they urged their request strongly, she gradually gave into their wishes. It was settled they should travel, but on condition that the Empress should draw the plan of their journey and name their attendants.

The Empress, (who was already prepared,) in a few days named their suite, fixed the time of their departure, the length of their absence, and the countries they should go through. Their Imperial Highnesses acquiesced in the whole, begging only that Prince Kourakin might be added to their retinue, and Versailles to the Courts they were to visit. The first was readily granted them, from the insignificance of the person; and the latter was also not refused, though it was not complied with till after repeated entreaties, and even then with much reluctance. Berlin was indeed mentioned by the Grand-Duchess, but was peremptorily, and even angrily, refused by the Empress; and every succeeding attempt of the King of Prussia, as well through their Imperial Highnesses as through his Ministers and other agents, though he has repeatedly renewed them, and every time under a different form, has fallen to the ground.

As long as Count Panin remained here, the temper and

disposition of their Imperial Highnesses suffered a perpetual revolution. Whenever a courier from Vienna brought them letters from the Emperor, they were quite Austrian, and delighted to a degree with their journey; when Count Panin had been with them, and had dealt out to them precepts from Potzdam, their sentiments changed, they scarce spoke to Count Cobenzel, and they seemed to be sorry they were to leave Petersburg. On Count Panin's going into the country, the scene changed; they became uniformly Austrian, talked to nobody but Count Cobenzel and his Lady; were full of the Emperor and of Vienna; and they never were on a footing of such cordiality with the Empress as during this period: they were even civil to Prince Potemkin, and I came in for a very considerable share of their favour. This consistent and pleasing behaviour, which had really endeared them to the Empress, and which had been the cause of their passing two months with her on a footing of cordiality and affection before unknown to them, ended with Count Panin's return. A storm was immediately conjured up which produced a temporary fermentation in the Palace, and which, I believe, nothing but an actual revolution could equal. He conducted it with all the skill of an old and experienced master of Court intrigue, and did not suffer it to get ahead till the very moment they were to depart.

To elucidate what I am going to write, it will be necessary to say a few words on this Minister's conduct since the beginning of the year. Finding his influence daily decrease, and that the means he had so often and so successfully employed to retrieve it were inefficacious, he began some time in February to complain of his health, and gradually grew more and more indisposed, till he had a plausible pretext to keep his house, without depriving himself of the society of his friends and ac-

quaintance; through these he conveyed both to the Empress and the public an exaggerated picture of his situation; he painted himself as an old and faithful servant, who had erred through an excess of zeal, and whose affection for the Empress's service was such, that he could not exist under the weight of her displeasure; that, unable to support it, he was determined to retire for a while into the country, as well for the recovery of his health as to withdraw from business in which he was no longer consulted, or permitted to have an opinion. While he was making these professions externally, he was employing underhand every engine he could set at work to regain the confidence of his Sovereign, not indeed by subscribing to her system and wishes, but by endeavouring to bring her over to his by the most artful and insidious misrepresentations. Unfortunately for him, his conduct in the projected marriage of the Grand-Duchess's sister had been so very notorious, and he, on this occasion, had acted in such direct opposition to the commands of the Empress, that nothing he could say or surmise gained any credit with her. Her suspicions were awoke, and none of his artifices would stand the test of the examination she gave them.

Had he known the intentions of the Empress, it is probable he never would have come back to such certain disgrace, nor ever have thought it worth while to hazard such a trial as he lately has ventured to do, but have listened to the unanimous advice of his friends, and passed the remainder of his days between Moscow and his estates; and, indeed, I am strongly disposed to believe that he never would have ventured it, if he had not, while in his retreat, been edged on by the King of Prussia. This Monarch had acquired such an habitual

authority over him, that he could not oppose his will; and it was the more irresistible now, as His Prussian Majesty entreated him almost in a supplicative manner to return; called him the only person capable of recovering his fallen interests, and mixed up so much art and flattery in his request, that a man of more fortitude and less ambition than Count Panin would have been staggered. These instances were conveyed to him in the country by messengers of the King of Prussia disguised, some as merchants, others as travellers, and through these was probably conveyed the plan of the operations to be observed on his arrival. Count Panin, however, it may be presumed, had no great hopes of success, since he said a few days after he was come back to Count Goertz, *Votre Maître veut que je me sacrifie, eh bien! je le ferai;* and the event has gone near to prove the prediction true to a melancholy degree.

Count Panin, immediately on his return, began by creating very strong alarms in the mind of the Grand-Duchess, of the bad consequences which often attend inoculation; and as she is remarkable for her maternal affection, and indeed for the minutest performance of every domestic duty, the idea of her children being in danger raised a most painful conflict in her breast. It embittered every pleasing idea of the journey, and the possibility of their not doing well, created in her the strongest desire of postponing it. Their physician, Dr. Kreuss, devoted to Count Panin, by his uncertain language, increased her anxiety, and not the most solemn assurances on the part of Baron Dimsdale and Dr. Rogerson could tranquillize her. The Grand-Duke partook strongly of these feelings, but Count Panin took care to operate on him in a still more powerful manner.

He had contrived to get at Prince Repnin's secret, and

he discovered to the Grand-Duke that what he thought to be a *voluntary* act of his own, was a premeditated and deep-laid scheme of others; that it possibly concealed the most fatal intentions; that perhaps it was intended he should *never* return to Russia; perhaps his children would be taken from him; and though he asserted none of these facts, yet he endeavoured to give them credit, by suggestions and presumptive reasonings. He talked of the ambitious and unprincipled character of Prince Potemkin; of that of those who surrounded the Empress; and even she herself did not escape his animadversions. He then expatiated on what he called certain intelligence relative to the Emperor; averred that he never meant sincerely his nephew should marry the Grand-Duchess's sister; that when she was once at Vienna, he could dispose of her as he pleased; and said such things that, even in cypher and by messenger, my pen cannot write them.

Such language held to a timid man like the Grand-Duke by one he has ever been used to respect and believe, could not but make the deepest impression. It unhinged him entirely; and so strong were his alarms that the following morning, Sunday the 13th Sept., O.S., both the Grand-Duke and the Grand-Duchess (for His Imperial Highness had been weak enough to communicate to her what he had heard from Count Panin) declared their fixed resolution of not departing till their children were perfectly recovered, and to this idea they strenuously adhered. They could not even be induced to appoint the day to which they wished to postpone it, nor could the Empress by any means obtain any further explanation from them. All that day, and the following Monday and Tuesday, things remained in this fluctuating situation; the post-horses were counter-

manded, the persons who were to have set out to prepare the inns, &c., stopped; and so much in earnest were the Grand Duke and Duchess, that even the Empress was in doubt what to do. Everything she had said to them had been without effect, and neither her solicitations, nor even an authoritative language, could prevail. It was in this situation I found the Court on Wednesday morning.

My friend partook more than I could expect from a man who has such resources in his character, of the temper of the day. He was perplexed, irresolute, and even despondent. When I first talked on the subject of his uneasiness, he seemed disposed not to enter into it, but on perceiving I was pretty exactly informed of what was going forward, he became less reserved; and, after hearing from me what I knew relative to the intentions of Count Panin before he left the country, and the means the King of Prussia had employed to stir him up, he opened himself more fully, and acquainted me, under the strictest injunctions of secrecy of the scene which had passed; of the particulars of Count Panin's conversation with the Grand-Duke, and of the very unpleasant dilemma to which the Empress was reduced. He talked even as if she would be obliged to compound matters, and not only to postpone the journey for a month, but even to permit their Imperial Highnesses to return through Berlin, as it seemed the Grand-Duchess had, in her affliction, lamented her not being permitted to see her relations at that Court. I did not hesitate a moment in reprobating this weak, and even dangerous act of complaisance; I told him that the journey had better be put off entirely, than undertaken under such conditions; that it was giving totally into Count Panin's views, and insuring him the

greatest triumph he ever had; that it would authorize the Grand-Duke in believing the wicked insinuations of this minister to be founded; that it would increase, instead of quieting his doubts, and fix on Her Imperial Majesty a reputation of irresolution and want of vigour highly injurious to her glory; that it appeared to me so critical a moment that the *smallest abatement* from the original plan would be attended with the *worst consequences;* that it was a decisive struggle which was to determine who was to direct and govern, and that his personal weight could not receive a severer blow than he himself would give it, if he suffered the Empress to relax.

He was visibly animated by what I said, and after, (as is his manner,) walking several times up and down the room without making me any reply, he went up to the Empress, and in about an hour returned, when he informed me that everything was settled. The departure of their Imperial Highnesses was fixed for the Sunday following, and such persons as were at Czarsco Zelo were to take leave of them directly. He told me, though the Empress had insisted on this arrangement, she had spoken at the same time to the Grand Duke and Duchess with such affection and cordiality, that she had calmed in great measure their disquietude. They, however, appeared very strongly moved in the evening when I waited on them to take leave; they were both extremely agitated; their eyes were red and full of tears, and from the reception they gave me, I clearly saw they had been listening to Count Panin.

From this ceremony I returned again to my friend, and urged on him the necessity of putting it out of the power of this Minister to produce a similar scene of confusion. What had just passed furnished so many good arguments that I had a very easy task to per-

form, and indeed Prince Potemkin informed me, that it was now Her Imperial Majesty's *fixed resolution to remove Count Panin entirely from her Councils*, and that though she had not yet settled the manner in which she would do it, the event was not less certain. That, however, for the sake of the Grand-Duke, she would do nothing till His Imperial Highness was set out. It was not therefore till Monday morning, Sept. 20, O. S., that Count Panin received an order to dismiss his Secretary, deliver up his papers, and though he was suffered to remain at the Council Board, yet he was to consider that place merely as titulary.

The blow, though he ought to have expected it, came upon him unprepared; and, joined to what he had felt on taking leave of the Grand-Duke, produced such an effect, that about seven the same evening he was seized with a sudden attack of a violent fever, became immediately light-headed, and was so far lost as neither to know the persons he spoke to nor what he said. He continued in this state of delirium all night, and was not relieved till the faculty had exhausted the whole store of blisters, bleeding, &c. He then became entirely lethargic, and if nature had not thrown out erysipelas on his leg, it is probable he would have been carried off by apoplexy. He now, however, is out of immediate danger, but his faculties are not yet restored, and it will be many weeks before he will be able to leave his bed. Though the Empress was, as is natural, greatly affected by this sudden illness, yet I was misinformed when I told your Lordship she had revoked her order for taking him from his Chancellerie: it has been carried into execution, and nothing now can restore Count Panin to power but an entire change of system, and a new modelling of the ministry. Considering all that is passed,

and that the Empress is acquainted with every part of it, he may consider himself as laid down on a bed of roses; his sentence would have been less mild if it had been pronounced by any of the preceding Sovereigns of Russia; but humanity and clemency are the most conspicuous virtues of the Empress's character. It is my duty to inform your Lordship that I receive no longer the smallest assistance from Prince Potemkin. He repeats nothing I say to him to the Empress; never conveys to me her sentiments; gives me no information; nor can I prevail on him to prevent the most egregious misrepresentations getting to Her Imperial Majesty's ears, and gaining a degree of credit with her. Whenever I talk to him on business he grows inattentive and impatient; and instead, as formerly, of entering with great cordiality into everything I said relative to our concerns, it should appear as if they had become perfectly indifferent to him.

This change in his conduct does not, I believe, arise from a variation of his political principles; and I am persuaded he is not converted by the French or Russian party; for, had this been the case, I must have discovered some traces of it in my researches, which have been particularly directed to this object. It arises from a very material change in his own situation, which makes it necessary for him to abandon every other consideration but the support of his own influence. This has lessened since the beginning of the year; and as he imputes it, though, I believe, wrongfully, in some measure to his having taken too great a share in foreign concerns, he is determined no longer to interfere in anything relative to them.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 5th, 16th November, 1781.

THE Prussians now give out that we treat their flag with more respect than that of the Empress; that none of their ships have been stopped; and this they attribute to the strong language their Master has held; and that till Her Imperial Majesty holds the same her trade will ever be molested.

The French and Spaniards affect to say, that unless the Northern Confederates exact from us a more strict observance of the principles of the Convention, they shall be forced to imitate our example, and stop Neutral ships wherever they meet them.

The first report has been propagated so artfully, and is contrived to appear so well authenticated, that it has gained credit with the Empress. The other two has answered the end proposed. It has confirmed her in the obstinate support of her extravagant system; and both have contributed to animate her against us. It was to obviate the ill effects of these intrigues, and to obtain, if possible, a fuller explanation of what I had heard from the Vice-Chancellor on Wednesday last, that I had on Saturday a long conversation with the Empress's Secretary; in which, without denying or acknowledging the right a Foreign Power has to require that a great and independent state should subscribe to principles such a Power chose to call universal law, I endeavoured to make him perceive, that, in no preceding war, nor towards any nation whatsoever, we ever had shewn the same attentions we now shewed Her Imperial Majesty; that ships carrying her flag were barely visited; and although they were laden universally with naval stores, all evidently

destined for the service of our enemies, yet they never were taken notice of by our Courts of Admiralty, and the most profuse damages were paid, if their short detention had been attended with any detriment to the cargo, or to the vessels; that instead of meeting with thanks, to be perpetually exposed to hear complaints, and instead of her being satisfied with what we had done, to find the Empress expected we should do still more, and give orders that no Russian ship should ever be stopped, were most painful considerations, and could not but raise in the end feelings very inconsistent with those sentiments we were so sincerely disposed to have for Her Imperial Majesty. That if she would condescend to reflect on the quarter from whence these complaints came, and on the style in which they were drawn up, she could not avoid seeing the end they aimed at, and perceive that while she thought herself affording protection to an injured and oppressed merchant, she was, in fact, acting as the tool of our enemies. That what had recently passed* was a striking example of what I advanced; it needed no comment, and I was convinced, if stated to Her Imperial Majesty with that accuracy and impartiality with which I knew he made his reports, would produce the effect it ought. That if she would be pleased to recollect the position in which England now stood, the great game it had at stake, the powerful exertions it was making, and these in support of a cause she herself acknowledged to be just, I never could be brought to believe that she would require at our hands an order, which, if confined to her ships alone, would involve us in endless disputes, and which, if extended universally, would be attended

* A Russian ship, freighted for Spain, was stopped by an English frigate, the Ariadne, and carried into Deal, but was afterwards released.—*Harris Papers.*

with the most fatal consequences. That I understood Prussian agents had been audacious enough to assert that their Master had, by intimidating us, obtained virtually this order, and that Prussian vessels passed unmolested, while those of Russia were detained by our cruizers; that I would be bold to say this assertion was a notorious falsehood.

The Secretaay is always attentive to what is said to him, and on this occasion he was particularly so. He replied, as usual, in a very few words. He, however, assured me that the Empress saw the late complaints against us had been hasty and premature; that she was too well disposed towards us, and too enlightened ever to be drawn in by any artifice our enemies might practise, and that I might be assured he would repeat to her all I said. This I again entreated him to do, assuring him, and with great sincerity, that I never wished to employ him, nor any one else, for any other purpose than to convey truth and reason to his Sovereign's ears, and that this once obtained, the business of my mission would do itself.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 9th, 20th Nov., 1781.

THE Empress now remarkably distinguishes the French and Prussian Ministers, and Sunday evidently sought an opportunity of talking with the latter, in a way not to be overheard. Till now, she had always treated Mons. de Verac with great coolness and expressed a dislike to him, yet for these last three Court days, she has excluded me and named him for her card party, and I know speaks well of him in private.

There is not the least doubt that Prince Potemkin has obtained these distinctions for them, neither, however incredible it appears, that he is in secret intelligence with Count Panin, and that it is probable that, after having produced his disgrace, he will attempt gradually to restore him to favour. It is equally evident that he is adverse to the Austrian cause, and only watches an opening, which the natural levity of the Empress's character must soon offer, of opposing it. This revolution in his behaviour and principles must be attributed partly to the inconstancy of his disposition, partly to the artful and intriguing disposition of Count Panin, but principally to a strong jealousy he entertains for the Secretary and his party.

It has made no alteration in my conduct towards him. I see him daily, more if possible than ever, and the pains he takes to deceive me are not greater than those I take to make him believe I am deceived by him. I follow him, however, through all his paths, and although I never can have the means of preventing the evil he is working, it will, at least, never take me unprepared, nor your Lordship uninformed.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 16th, 27th Nov., 1781.

I SHALL now, according to my promise, give your Lordship an extract of several communications I have had with my friend.

He began by his usual preface of lamenting the alteration in the Empress's character; that she was directed either by her own whims, or by some invisible hand, which

his penetration could never discover; that he could effect nothing, and that, thus circumstanced, it was particularly hard he should be charged with the odium of every obnoxious or unfavourable measure. He then launched out against the rancour of his enemies, &c.

He then with great art touched upon the frequent visits Count Goertz and the Marquis de Verac made him and which he well knew could not escape my notice. He said the first had negotiated with him the purchase of horses in the Ukraine to remount the Prussian cavalry; that to obtain this permission, and to thank him for it when obtained, had brought Count Goertz oftener than usual to his house;—that as for the Marquis de Verac, he was a man of so very insignificant a character, that he supposed his visits could not have given me any umbrage; that, however, he could assure me, they did not arise from any pleasure he had in his company, or any important commission with which he was charged; that he came to him solely to plead in behalf of an unfortunate Frenchman now under sentence of death, and to promote the settlement of a Mons. Antoine who wished to establish a French house at Kerson; and with a view probably to divert me from having any serious ideas on these subjects, Prince Potemkin exercised a talent he possesses very completely, and counterfeited so inimitably a dialogue between himself, the French Minister, and French merchant, that it was impossible not to lose sight for a while of the very interesting matters on which we were talking. He, however, soon resumed them, and by bringing innumerable facts to my recollection, tending to impress me with the idea that in all political affairs he could do very little; that this little had ever been favourable, and that it was not his fault it had not been still more so, he went on by blaming, with-

out reserve, the conduct of his Imperial Mistress and said he was sorry to see such an incoherent enervated behaviour attributed to his direction and advice.

He talked of subduing the Turks, controlling the King of Prussia, separating Austria from France, and of making a Triple Alliance between England and the two Imperial Courts; but he acknowledged himself this to be chimerical, and I considered it merely as a plausible and insidious language, calculated to serve the purpose of the moment.

Such, my Lord, is the sum of the several very long conversations I have had with my friend; although I am persuaded their general tendency will sufficiently strike your Lordship. I must beg leave to subjoin a few remarks, the most material of which is, that indolent and careless as Prince Potemkin is, he never would have taken so much trouble, unaccused as he was by me either directly or indirectly, to justify himself in so elaborate a manner, did he not feel his conduct stood in need of an apology.

The way he accounts for the visits of the Prussian and French Ministers is very artful, the more so, as till now, they certainly have not entered on business; but it is equally certain that he pays his court to them, solicits their acquaintance, and this in virtue of the secret intelligence which reigns between him and Count Panin, the consequences of which will, in time, unfold themselves. What he says of the Empress comes under the same description. It is evident that he cannot, by direct application, force her to grant what he asks; but he well knows how to operate on her gradually, and never fails producing in the end every effect he wishes; and his not consenting to employ this practice in our behalf, is the reason of his having failed in his attempt to serve me.

He therefore treats me with more personal attention than ever, and uses expressions of regard and attachment he never employed when these sentiments were more sincere. I, on my side, am determined to appear to give in to the deception, to credit all he says, and neither to hurt him by contradiction, nor alarm him by inquisitiveness. To a person of his cast of mind, nothing I could say or do would reclaim him; he is actuated by motives above the reach of my faculties, and every attempt of the kind would increase the evil, while by wearing the appearance of security, I may perhaps oblige him to put less circumspection in his behaviour, and be a check on him. The task, however, I have to perform, becomes every day more delicate, and my situation more and more difficult.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD VISCOUNT STORMONT.

Petersburg, 7th, 18th December, 1781.

If anything was wanting to confirm me in the opinion that the present disposition of this Court is unfriendly to Great Britain, it would be the manner in which they received the late unpleasant news from America.* They attribute the loss we have sustained to our misconduct; and instead of expressing that degree of concern and alarm a nation whose interests are so indispensably connected with those of England ought to feel, they exclaim against us in the most uncandid manner. I was in hopes, from the countenance the Empress put on when she spoke to me as she came from church on Sunday (immediately after the reception of the news), that it had had a proper effect on her; but I soon found from Prince Potemkin,

* The surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his army, the 17th of October, at York Town.

with whom I passed the remainder of the day, that I was mistaken. He was not, indeed, less friendly than usual in his professions; neither did he spare his expressions of concern at what had happened, but he mixed them up with such a portion of illiberal blame, that it was with difficulty I kept my temper within bounds. I, however, avoided giving way to an indignation I could not help feeling, and contented myself with saying, that I was persuaded the language he held arose from his concern at the untoward incident which had just taken place; that therefore though we differed as to the cause, yet we agreed as to the effect of the present crisis; and that I was certain he would be as active as I could wish him to be, to make the Empress perceive that if she continued to see with indifference the progress of the ambitious designs of our enemies, she was neglectful of her own interests.

I did not, indeed, expect any success from what I said; but it was my duty to leave nothing untried; and I feel the importance, as long as possible, of keeping up an appearance of intimate and confidential connexion with this singular personage.

I am inclined to suppose that the Empress feels more real concern on this occasion than any of her ministers; but in my present situation I can take no advantage of this disposition. I, however, to-morrow, shall try the Secretary; and in conversing with him, shall, as I did in my conference with Prince Potemkin, avoid most carefully committing the honour of my Royal Master by anything like a humiliating application for assistance. I shall rest my arguments on what are the natural and evident interests of Russia, urge the conduct this empire for its own sake ought to adopt, and on these

grounds enforce what I have to say. I feel at all times, and towards all people, the importance of keeping up the honour of our Nation, but never more than at moments like these, and at a Court which delights in gratifying its own vanity at the expense of others.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 7th, 18th Jan., 1782.

My Lord,—Mons. Markoff* left this place this morning early for his destination. I have every reason to believe that he will execute the Empress's commands with better judgment, and more impartiality than his colleague, and that the reports he makes of the state, disposition, and temper of the Republic, will be free from prejudice, and all wilful misrepresentations. I have done my utmost to impress him with a just idea of our situation as far as it regards Holland, and to prepare him by every previous information it was in my power to give him, not to be driven from his bias by the specious and plausible reasonings he will hear made use of on his arrival at the Hague. I repeatedly mentioned to him, that no modification which would affect virtually the spirit of the conditions we had given in here, (and with which he is entrusted,) must be thought of, and that he would mislead the Dutch, and protract the war, if he allowed them to entertain the remotest hope of this kind. I added, likewise, that it would be absolutely necessary to prevent their foisting in, in any shape, the Armed Neutrality; anything which bore a reference to that would immediately alter the nature

* Sent to conduct the Mediation between England and Holland.

of the Empress's interposition, which would then be an Armed Mediation, and, of course, become inadmissible. After enlarging on these two points, the importance of which I could not enough dwell upon, I observed to him, that in the outward behaviour of the Duke de la Vauguyon* he would probably find great apparent friendship and cordiality, yet he might be assured that no one had opposed, or would oppose, by every concealed and underhand means, the success of this negotiation, from its very beginning to its conclusion, more than this Ambassador; that I had the best authority for saying, that, to his confidential friends, he employed a very different language respecting the Empress from that his Court publicly affected to hold, and that he was particularly hurt at his (Mons. Markoff's) nomination, fully persuaded that he should not find him so docile, or so easy to be deceived, as Prince Galitzin. I concluded by saying, that I trusted no mention would be made of a Suspension of Arms, till the preliminaries were actually signed. Such a measure was so notoriously advantageous to the Dutch and detrimental to us, that it could not be expected we should consent to it, as long as the event of the negotiation was doubtful.

My last conversation with Mons. Markoff took place yesterday, a few hours before his departure, and unless the charms of Potzdam work on him, from everything he said, he will arrive at the Hague, with the most right principles and best intentions. I took the liberty also to make a few remarks on this subject, and to give him such intelligence on the character and disposition of His Prussian Majesty, as might put him on his guard against His very persuasive manner, and almost irresistible eloquence. I flatter myself, on the whole, to have left

* French Minister at the Hague.

nothing unsaid, and that this new Minister will be, at least, personally well disposed towards us; and though he must ultimately be governed by his instructions, yet that he will neither write nor insinuate anything to induce the Empress to make these instructions unfriendly to us.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 11th, 22nd January, 1782.

My Lord, — I fear I shall not be able to convey through any private channel to Her Imperial Majesty, either any reflections on the present situation of affairs, or the important intelligence your Lordship transmits me.* *I have no one on whom I can rely*; and, since the alteration in my friend's sentiments is become more manifest, I am forsaken by many dependants and hangers-on who, by obliging me, thought they were obliging him. All these, by a transition natural to such characters, are now gone over to the opposite side. The Empress, too, having entirely withdrawn all her distinctions from me, no one chooses to speak to her either about me or in my name; and those who formerly were accustomed to mention me favourably, think they gratify her by depreciating and sinking me in her opinion. I therefore am not only in a situation perfectly isolated, but stand exposed to all the malevolence of personal animosity, directed by powerful and vindictive enemies, thoroughly versed in Court intrigue, and whose unfriendly dispositions towards my Court are, I am sure, in-

* Lord Stormont writes to Sir James Harris, Dec. 28th, 1781, that he believes that the secret object of the Alliance between the two Imperial Courts is the *dismemberment of the Turkish Empire*, and that to thwart this the French Government had remitted five hundred thousand French crowns to their Ambassador at Constantinople.

creased from the ill-will they bear me. These never will suffer me to obtain that reputation, which success in my negotiations would give me, and will spare no pains to bring down on me that discredit and disgrace which generally attend him who fails in what he undertakes.

If I attended to nothing but my private feelings, I should never mention these facts. I am sufficiently indifferent to what is said or thought of me here; the consciousness of having ever done my duty to the utmost, and your Lordship's candour, sets my mind at rest on that score. But my public conduct is too nearly concerned with what I write for me to be silent, and I should be essentially neglectful if I did not declare, that I feel every day disqualifies me more and more for remaining at this Court. Your Lordship may be assured that it is neither a dislike to my position, a desire of gratifying any private feeling, nor an unbecoming despondency that induces me to hold this language; it flows from what I think is conviction. I should be happy, very happy, to be mistaken.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 4th, 15th February, 1782.

My Lord,—The weather has been again uncommonly severe: the thermometer the night before last was at thirty degrees below the freezing point, and has never been at less than twenty degrees since Monday.

The epidemical distemper diminishes.* Its effects have been felt in every part of this neighbourhood; and I understand it has reached Courland and Polish Prussia.

Yesterday the Vice Chancellor, *ex-ministerially* (as he

* Sir James Harris calls it *influenza* in his private letters; and says that it was so general that it occasioned an entire suspension of business.

took particular care to tell me) assured me that it was his opinion, that if we would consent to acknowledge the principles of the Armed Neutrality, that we should have immediately peace with Holland, on our own terms. He said both what he heard from the Dutch Ambassador here, and from Prince Galitzin at the Hague, authorized him to hold this language. His Excellency went into many arguments to shew why we should not hesitate on this occasion; the principal ones of which attempted to prove that such a conduct on our side would completely overset the French party in Holland, and insure us, beyond a doubt, the friendship of the Empress. He was also very diffuse on this occasion, and seemed to take particular pains to make me relish his reasonings, and to induce me to report them to your Lordship as conclusive and judicious. He, however, frequently assured me he only spoke from himself, not in consequence of orders.

I replied to him in a very few words, that the Armed Neutrality was an object *entirely distinct* from our quarrel with the Dutch; that the avowal or disavowal of the principles it set forth ought not either to retard or to accelerate a pacification between us; that our enemies and ill-wishers, well knowing Her Imperial Majesty's partiality to this League had from the beginning attempted to connect it with our disputes with Holland, and mix up a discussion of these points with our negotiation for peace, and, by blending the two objects together, create additional confusion and ill-will; that I was happy to hear from such respectable authority as his, that there existed a disposition in Holland for peace, and that there was a probability that the only remaining difficulty was the settling their trade as Neutrals in time of war; that this could easily be effected by a fair and candid revision of the Treaty of 1674; and that this, for the sake of

both nations, was to be wished; for the Dutch, more than for us; for every day's experience must convince them that they, not we, were the greatest losers by the present war.

The Vice-Chancellor stuck by his text, and said that, as he spoke as a sincere well-wisher to Great Britain, he recommended me to write home what I heard from him. This I readily promised him to do; and I have repeated it faithfully to your Lordship in this letter.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO HUGH ELLIOT, ESQ., BERLIN.

Petersburg, 7th, 18th February, 1782.

MY DEAR SIR,—As Count Romanzow may not choose to enlarge on the subject of this Court, and may either be ashamed or unwilling to enter into a description of its temper and humour, of the springs which move it, the principles which guide it, and the fluctuating system in which it wanders, it shall be my task, by this very safe conveyance, to speak on these points, to open to you the "secrets of my *prison-house;*" secrets which, though *I* am not forbid to tell, *you* are forbid to repeat.

The permanent interests of the state are sacrificed to those of the moment. That wise system of policy, so essential to Europe in general, so advantageous to Russia, and so salutary to Great Britain, is forgotten. What may happen never is adverted to; and the great point is to take immediate advantage of what does happen, without considering whether it is at the expense of a friend or a foe, without reflecting on its instantaneous effects or consequence. To establish an active trade in a country where there are neither ships, sailors, ports, nor merchants, is the phrenzy of the hour.

The means used to effect it are not less erroneous than the attempt itself is impossible. An universal Free Navigation is to be crammed down the throats of all the Maritime Powers; privileges, which, if they belonged to Russia alone, might be serviceable to her, are to be granted promiscuously to every one; and while the greatest pains are taking to make the Russian merchants *carriers*, encouragement is given to all their neighbours, by the Empress herself, to become *carriers*, and she stifles with one hand what she cherishes with the other. But vanity, not want of knowledge, produces this conduct. Fond as she is of the idea of creating "*une marine marchande*," she is still fonder of being thought an universal Maritime Legislatrix; and when this *gloriole* is held out to her, she cannot resist its charms. It is in vain to remind her how contradictory the principles of her famous Convention are to her own conduct in the last Turkish war; how contrary they are to the established doctrines of the *droit des gens;* how detrimental they are to one of the belligerent Powers, and how advantageous to the others: in a word, how very *unneutral* her Armed *Neutrality* is. Such a language, which I have often conveyed to her indirectly, and once *directly*, carries with it no conviction; it raises anger, and, instead of slackening, only serves to tighten, the knot. Reasonings equally wise, and the evidence of which *doit sauter aux yeux*, on the present situation of Europe, of the very great importance it is for the Northern Powers, for their own sake, to observe a conduct different from that they hold, meet the same fate; or if they are answered, it is by recrimination, by entering into an examination of the insulary system we have pursued since the Peace of Paris, and by charging us with all the evils brought down upon us.

Awake to our errors, and asleep to their own, they seem to think themselves authorized to trifle away their own preponderance and ours, because ten years ago we did not choose to enter into views of which we knew neither the beginning nor the end. It is singular that whilst everything we propose is rejected, our professions mistrusted, and our assertions discredited, that our enemies, whose character for veracity certainly till now never stood in competition with ours, are listened to, believed, and even admired. The idea of the moderation and unambition of the French Ministry is so solidly established, that three or four acts they lately have been forced to bring to light, and which a few years back would have given the alarm to all Europe, are now passed over unnoticed. They are mollified by a compliment, gratified by taking away the 50 sols *du droit du tonneau*, and by an insignificant but well timed complaisance, which speaks to the passions, not to reason. We are here lulled into the most fatal security, rocked into a golden dream, *dont le réveil sera amer.*

The English, who do not know how to flatter, and who, if they did, are not in a situation to wait the slow effects of this poison; who feel the justness of their cause, and the fair ground on which it rests, and who cannot by any representations, not even by experience, be brought to believe that a Sovereign who has raised her empire to such a pitch of glory, who has given such frequent proofs that she is not ignorant of her own interests, or indifferent to those of her friends, can be led away by a phantom, and be deaf to those arguments she has so often admitted,—the English, I say, cannot be brought to deviate from their national character in their transactions with her. They complain when they think themselves injured; they remonstrate

when there appears a manifest partiality for their adversaries; and they cannot be brought to acknowledge as infinitely wise what their common sense tells them is infinitely absurd. Thus, therefore, are we become unpopular; "our nation is degenerated, our ministry is corrupt, insufficient, and unfriendly, and it is not safe for any one to join their cause to ours."

As for myself, my situation is every day more and more thorny; I am more and more isolated; and from having been too *much*, cannot easily or quietly sink into that state of nothingness I now wish to arrive at, till the chapter of accidents again calls me forth. Unfortunately I am (and, perhaps, not without reason) an object of personal animosity, and shall not be permitted to remain peaceably *dans mon coucou* till such time as matters are ripe for my again appearing on the horizon. If so, I must depart; and neither the instances of Lord Stormont, which are very strong, nor any consideration whatsoever, shall induce me to stay; and this not because I am not most perfectly indifferent to all personal attacks—and feel myself fully equal to give as good as they bring—but because then my public and private character will be so interwoven with my public and ministerial one, that in order to hurt *the individual*, the minister never will be allowed to succeed in anything he undertakes.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 22d Feb., 5th March, 1782.

My Lord,—I understand that the courier from Vienna brings the sentiments of the Emperor on the answers the several Belligerent powers have made to the last note delivered them by the two Imperial Courts, in their

capacity of Mediators, and, from what I learn, both he and her Imperial Majesty are of opinion, *that any further steps taken by them at present to forward the general work of peace, would be entirely useless.*

I am not without some faint hopes, that the language used by His Catholic Majesty on this occasion, and the very strong determination he professes, of not concluding peace till he has forced from us either one or both of our possessions in the Mediterranean,* has, in some measure, opened Her Imperial Majesty's eyes. I, however, ground what I say more on general observation than on any particular or authentic intelligence. The tide here, at this moment, sets so strong against us, that it must be some very extraordinary conduct indeed on the part of our enemies, that would restore the Empress to that regard for our interests and welfare she once professed, and which, for her own sake, ought ever to belong to her.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO HUGH ELLIOT, ESQ., BERLIN.

Petersburg, 25th Feb., 8th March, 1782.

I AM much concerned both at the unpleasant accident which happened to Mrs. Elliot at the Opera, and still more at its unpleasant consequences ; † these, however, I do not doubt, you will soon correct by your laudable endeavours. I should be happy to pass the summer with you at Hoppenrath, and still more so at Minto, but, *Fata*

* Gibraltar and Minorca ; the latter was taken by the Spaniards soon after.

† Followed by Mr. Elliot's duel ; a description of which is given by Thiébault in his Mémoires. The Harris Papers would prove his account to be much less *true* than amusing, and the whole of what he says of Sir J. Harris himself an entire fable, even as to the time of his mission at Berlin. Ex his disce omnes.

negant inimicaque numina Trojae. I can send you little private news from hence; we are as insipid and monotonous as a Dutch canal.

The slowness of the Dutch proceedings, and the state of anarchy and confusion in which they are, makes it impossible to see clear, and I can only tell you that we are ready to conclude the war on fair and adequate conditions, but that we shall hear of no other; that the Empress, on one side, seems determined to prevent, as far as lies in her power, an alliance between the Republic and France, and on the other, to be bent on procuring for the States all the privileges of the Armed Neutrality.

Potemkin has lost neither his favour nor power, but I do not like the manner in which he employs it so well as I did formerly. I have spoken fully on these points by Romanzow. I shall, probably, soon be able to inform you of what passed in the tête-à-tête between Markoff and the King.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 4th, 15th March, 1782.

My Lord,—I passed two days at Cronstadt the beginning of the week. The state of the navy is far from flourishing. No money in the Treasury, and the sums appropriated for the building of new ships greatly insufficient; though, besides 500,000 roubles down, the Empress has increased the annual fund for her marine, from 12 to 16 millions. A great scarcity of wood, and, what is still more extraordinary, not a bundle of hemp, or a ton of iron, in any of their warehouses. The timber for building the first one hundred gunship, I saw and examined, and, though chosen with the greatest care, appears decaying before it is put together. The ships returned last year from the Mediterranean and Lisbon,

will, all of them, be obliged to be docked, and several in a manner built anew. Ten, and four frigates, are ordered to be ready this year, half for Leghorn, and the rest for a cruize nearer home. I shall send their names by the first opportunity. In an emergency they could, at the utmost, send twenty line-of-battle ships out of the Baltic, and then this sea would be left unguarded. They have only 15,000 sailors, and no care taken to form others; and their officers are so exceedingly ignorant, idle, and inattentive, that, without the foreigners in their service, they would not be a match for the weakest of their Baltic neighbours.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 8th, 19th March, 1782.

My Lord,—I may now venture to assure your Lordship with certainty, that there will, in a very short time, be a new favourite. He is the same I mentioned some posts back, and he is chosen by Prince Potemkin among his attendants. The only remaining difficulty is to get rid, *decently*, of the present possessor, who has conducted, and still conducts himself, with such perfect complaisance and circumspection, that it is impossible to lay any charge at his door. He is neither jealous, inconstant nor overbearing; and, even in these moments, when he cannot be ignorant of his approaching fall, he preserves the same placid unexceptionable temper. This, however, will only tend to postpone, not to prevent, the public installation of his successor. The resolution is irrevocably taken, and my friend is too much interested in this change to suffer it to be recalled. It will restore him to his plenitude of power, and, for the first month or six weeks, I foresee he will be in a manner omnipotent.

I should be happy could I also foresee any chance of his making a good use of this increase of influence; but, as well from what I observe, as from what I hear, it is devoutly to be wished he should employ it in heaping riches on himself, and honours on his family, and not, in any shape, in the guidance of the political system of this Empire; since, I am persuaded, he would give it a direction very different from those assurance she has so often, and with such an appearance of sincerity, made me.

The Prussian Minister, who is the soul of the adverse party, and who gives life and activity to the French, Dutch, and Spaniard, has been very assiduous, though invisibly so, in paying his court to him, and His Prussian Majesty, by what means I cannot imagine, has found out the secret of recovering his friendship. Count Panin has certainly stood him in good stead, on this occasion. Count Goertz does nothing without consulting him, and however singular it may appear, this discarded Minister, since his disgrace, has contrived to hurt the Austrian interest here, much more essentially than when he opposed it openly at the head of his department. A few weeks will probably produce events; in the meanwhile, everything, as is usual at these moments, is at a stand; even the common business of the day is neglected, and Her Imperial Majesty has, for this last fortnight, been visible to none but to those who compose her private society.

[On the 27th March, Lord North resigned, and Lord Rockingham came in, with Mr. Fox as Foreign Secretary. He had inspired the Empress with an ardent and almost romantic admiration of his character and talents, and the effects of this partiality became immediately evident in her behaviour towards us. Sir James Harris saw with

pleasure the Minister whom he most admired, and who had been his companion at Oxford, and his personal friend placed at the head of the department in which he served.]

Although Sir James Harris with many other Whigs separated from Fox in 1792 when he wished us to acknowledge the French Republic, he retained his friendship for him till the end of his life, and both in his private letters and language always expresses himself more personally attached to him than to any other public man.

LETTER FROM MR. C. J. FOX TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

St. James's, April 2nd, 1782.

DEAR SIR,—As this letter may probably reach you before any sent by the post, I take the first opportunity of informing you that His Majesty has made a total change in his Administration here. The particular names of the persons who compose the new Ministry you will learn by the Gazette which I have the honour of sending you enclosed.

The intimacy which formerly subsisted between us, and which has been interrupted only by the accidents which have separated us, and not by any ill-will on either side, will, I trust, make it not disagreeable to you to correspond with me. And I can assure you, on my part, that I shall always be happy to have any opportunity of shewing my esteem for a person who seems to have shewn so much zeal and ability in the public service. You will perceive by my public despatch the complexion of the new system of Government which prevails in this country, and how much we are inclined to pacific measures with Holland in particular. Whatever you can do to forward these views, and to dispose the Empress's mind to a more

active and efficient Mediation between this country and Holland, will, you may be assured, be accounted by His Majesty's present Ministers as the most important of all services.

I am very sorry to find by the tenour of all your later despatches, that your situation is become so irksome to you; I wish you would do me the honour of hinting to me in what manner you would wish it changed. I know you too well to suppose that you would wish to remain where untoward circumstances prevent your abilities from being so serviceable to the public as they ought to be, and yet I should be very sorry to take any step which might appear harsh or abrupt with respect to a person for whom I have a most unfeigned regard. I really should be much obliged to you if you would write to me openly and frankly upon this subject.

I am, with great truth and regard, dear Sir,

Your very obedient humble Servant,

C. J. Fox.

LETTER FROM MR. CHARLES J. FOX TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

St. James's, April 2nd, 1782.

Sir,—I received by Mons. de Simolin's courier, on the 29th ult., your letters of March 9th; and, by the mail which arrived yesterday, your letters of March 1st and 5th, all which I have had the honour of laying before the King. Mons. de Simolin, having communicated to me on the 28th ult. an extract of a letter from the Prince Galitzin and Mons. de Markoff to their Minister, and His Majesty having referred the same to His confidential servants, His Majesty was pleased to direct me, on the following day, to write an answer to Mons. de Simolin, a copy of which I enclose, as also a copy of the extract communicated to me by Mons de Simolin.

I need not observe to you, that by this conduct, His Majesty has manifested, as well his ardent desire of peace with the Republic, as the attention which he always wishes to shew to the sentiments of Her Imperial Majesty; and, at the same time, by conceding the only point* on which their High Mightinesses in their public resolutions insist, as a basis for negotiation, leaves no pretence to their High Mightinesses for the continuation of hostilities, unless they absolutely give up the ground taken by them in their resolution of the 4th ult., of which I send you a copy enclosed. The use which can be made at the Court of Petersburg of this concession, is too obvious to make it necessary for me to point it out to a person whose signal abilities, and great knowledge of that Court in particular, will enable him, no doubt, to take the best advantage of it. But this good effect, at least, cannot fail to result from it, that Her Imperial Majesty, and all Europe, must perceive, from the first act of the new Administration and new system which has taken place in this country, that there is the greatest eagerness to make every reasonable advance towards peace, and the most ardent desire to pursue such measures as may meet the wishes and conciliate the friendship of Her Imperial Majesty. His Majesty is so solicitous that no time should be lost upon this important occasion, that I have his orders to send this despatch by a messenger.

It cannot escape your sagacity that the principal point for you to insist on is, to attribute His Majesty's concession to the deference he is always inclined to pay to Her Imperial Majesty's sentiments and opinions.

I am, with great truth and regard, Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

C. J. Fox.

* That the Mediation should be based on the Treaty of 1764.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 25th March, 5th April, 1782.

My Lord,—The old favourite has not yet received his regular dismission; his extreme complaisance pleads strongly in his behalf. He furnishes no one plausible excuse for being discarded; yet it is, I believe, certain that his lot is cast, that a house is purchased for him, and that the usual magnificent leave-taking presents are preparing. These are very considerable, and as they come so often must necessarily, at length, affect the revenues of the empire. Not less than a million of roubles yearly, exclusive of the enormous pensions of Prince Orlow and Prince Potemkin, have been expended since my arrival on this account.

The Empress seems exceedingly anxious to be informed of what is passing in our Parliament at this moment. She was very eager to be informed of the particulars of the debate which took place in the House of Commons, on the 28th February,* and either through Prince Potemkin, or the Vice-Chancellor, inquires regularly of me every post-day, whether I have any new information. I wish I could attribute this to anything more than *simple curiosity.*

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD STORMONT.

Petersburg, 1st, 12th April, 1782.

My Lord,—I am expecting with impatience the messenger your Lordship announces, though from everything

* In this debate Lord North was left in a minority, upon resolutions moved by General Conway, condemning all farther hostilities in our American colonies.

I see on all sides, there does not appear to be the remotest hopes of a pacification with Holland. Mons. Markoff's intentions, I believe, are good, but he comes too late, and his colleague has already given so completely into the views of the French, that it will not be in the power of this gentleman to rectify his conduct, or to correct the errors he has committed, either wilfully or through ignorance.

I have reason to believe that the Empress is alarmed at the progress of the French influence in Holland. The event of the Negotiation which she so strenuously wished to set on foot, will undoubtedly convince her of the truth of what she has so often, and so long ago, been told by us, relative to the sentiments and prevailing disposition of that Republic. I hope soon to be able to speak more accurately as to her intentions and opinion on this subject; but intelligence of all kinds is now so carefully concealed from me, that it is with the greatest difficulty I can follow up even the common occurrences of the day.

LETTER FROM MR. C. J. FOX TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

St. James's, April 19th, 1782.

My Dear Sir,—It is with great pleasure that I obey His Majesty's commands to signify to you his entire approbation of the vigilance with which you attend to all the intrigues and changes in your Court. His Majesty's wishes for real and effectual friendship between Russia and this country are fully as strong as ever they were, and you cannot render a more effectual service to His Majesty, than by suggesting any means which your experience and knowledge of men and things where you are, may suggest to you as most likely to compass so desirable.

an object. Whether there are any hopes from your friend, or if there are none? Whether any other channels may be tried? Whether the Court of Berlin is a certain road? Whether applications to the personal interests of individuals may be practicable, and likely to be efficacious? All these are objects upon which good information here will be of the greatest importance, and on which your opinion will have great weight.

I am, with great truth and regard, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

—C. J. Fox.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE RIGHT HON. C. J. FOX.

Petersburg, 19th, 30th April, 1782.

Sir,—His Majesty, by conceding the only point on which the States-General insist, and by having consented to take the Treaty of 1674 as the basis of this negotiation, has most completely met the idea of Her Imperial Majesty; and, in making her Ministers acquainted with this resolution, there remained little more for me to do than to accompany it with those expressions of cordial friendship, and to state it in such a light that the principal cause of this concession might appear to arise from a deference to Her Imperial Majesty's sentiments and opinions. This, in every conversation I have held with the Vice-Chancellor, I have been very mindful to inculcate.

After having sufficiently enlarged on this part of my instructions, in which I am happy to say I have very completely succeeded, I adverted to such measures as appeared to me necessary to be taken to give that efficacy and activity to the Mediation which might the best tend

to contribute to its success. I reminded the Vice-Chancellor, that, by this condescension on our side, we had not only entirely come into the propositions of the Dutch themselves, but acted in perfect conformity to the desires of this Court, &c.—That the idea of Holland becoming absolutely French was so repugnant to the evident interests of this Empire that I felt it superfluous to say anything on the subject; and my motive for dwelling on it thus long was not to persuade his Excellency of a truth he and every good and thinking Russian must admit, but to caution him against the wiles and deceits of the French Cabinet, which, from their having been but too often successful, I could not too much guard against.

I then took the liberty of pointing out what appeared to me the most efficacious means of giving energy to the Empress's Intervention, and which could only be done by encouraging such friends as we may still retain in Holland, and by intimidating those attached to the French. It was for this reason that I advised the immediate despatching of a courier to Messrs. Galitzin and Markoff; that these gentlemen should have the most positive and clear instructions to insist on their High Mightinesses complying with their own resolution, and this immediately, without delay, and without being suffered to have recourse to that procrastination they have ever pretended inseparable from the Constitution of their Republic, whenever they were to deliberate on a measure they did not approve, but which we had lately seen did not exist when the favourite project of a French union and the Independence of America were under debate. I urged, therefore, in the strongest manner, the necessity of the Russian Ministers at the Hague holding a firm and resolute language; of their making the Dutch

feel that a Princess of such weight and power as the Empress, and who, from views of humanity, and for *their sake*, had intervened between us and them, was not to be trifled with.

I did not venture to speak in this manner to the Vice-Chancellor till I had previously, through Mons. Besberodko, and even some still more private channels conveyed the insinuation to the Empress, and till I had good grounds for believing that they would be relished by her. As the Vice-Chancellor is only the ostensible minister, it would have been losing my labour if I had not first taken these steps.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE RIGHT HON. C. J. FOX.

Petersburg, 19th, 30th April, 1782.

SIR,—Besides the Separate Peace with the Dutch the Empress is strongly bent on making a general peace. She wishes to set the joint Mediation again on foot, and that the preliminary proposals the two Imperial Courts gave in to the belligerent powers in the course of last summer, and which were refused by all of them, should again be renewed, and that these should serve as the groundwork of the Negotiation.

As they have certainly been a subject of your thoughts, it is superfluous entering into any reasoning upon them. We at the time refused them *immediately;* our enemies, after long and mature deliberation. Whatever may have happened since to alter our resolution relative to them, nothing certainly has intervened to change theirs; and it is but fair to suppose that if the two Mediating Courts were again to make a tender of these preliminary proposals, those of Bourbon would again decline them. We

possibly may induce the two Imperial Courts to speak to France and Spain, as the Empress at this moment does to Holland: at all events we shall conciliate to ourselves their good-will, and destroy that idea of our *roideur et fierté*, so prevalent on the Continent.

The Empress has a very just and delicate notion of our American quarrel; and enters into the nicest distinctions between that war and those we are waging with the European powers.

In regard to our war with France and Spain, I believe, however contrary to her own interests, she was not at first sorry to see us engaged in this unequal conflict, or that we should lose somewhat of that superiority of which she, in common with the other great Powers of Europe, was jealous. She now begins to be alarmed at the turn it has taken; and though she may, from motives inseparable from human weakness, wish to see us *less*, yet she is not so ignorant of her own welfare as to be desirous of seeing France and Spain *greater*, and, I am satisfied, would at this moment be a more impartial and friendly Mediatrix between Great Britain and them than if the Negotiation had taken place when originally proposed.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE RIGHT HON. C. J. FOX.

Petersburg, 19th, 30th April, 1782.

The Empress is disposed to have very great confidence in the New Administration. She expects that such measures will now be adopted as she has all along wished for, and sometimes advised. It may, perhaps, be required of me to point out such as may be particularly pleasing to her; and I am the more ready to attempt to

do this, as I am sure you will not consider me as presuming to intrude advice, or offering opinions of my own, but merely as conveying every information, and suggesting to you every idea, from which the smallest use or assistance may be derived.

The object which dwells uppermost in her thoughts is the making the principles of the Armed Neutrality universal law. She originally meant this measure for a very different purpose from that it has effected. She was egregiously deceived in the drawing it up. Pride prevented her from retracting; and vanity and excessive flattery have since riveted it on her mind.

Had we, in the first instance, either rejected it *entirely*, or else admitted it for *Russia alone*, I firmly believe it would have signified nothing. I said as much at the time, but it is now too late; and I am very far from thinking it is worth while gratifying Her Imperial Majesty's whim (for it is no more) at so dear a price as the acknowledging the five points of the Neutral Convention. I must add, however, that nothing could so completely restore her to us, or be so likely to embroil her with our enemies. Any show of confidence we think proper to make relative to our intended measures, whether pacific or otherwise, would please her. *She loves to be consulted;* and the great point in dealing with her is, the making her adopt the sentiments of others as her own. The King of Prussia was for ten years in possession of this Court, by making the Empress believe that he was led by *her*, when, in fact, she was moving entirely under *his* direction. She is spoiled by flattery and success. Levity, and want of precision in her ideas, are the weak side of her character; and these increase as she gets older. Prince Potemkin is no longer our friend; whether he was ever sincerely so, or not, I cannot take upon me to say. The Secretary

seems well disposed; and he is the only man on whom I have any reliance, or from whom I derive any effectual assistance.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO HUGH ELLIOT, ESQ., BERLIN.

Petersburg, 19th, 30th April, 1782.

THE EMPRESS had a *personal* dislike to the late Administration; she is disposed to think well of this, and the first step they have taken has her entire approbation. She will, in consequence of it, *speak out* in Holland, and the Dutch are now on the eve of feeling in the manner they deserve their outrageous and absurd conduct, either by being forced into a peace against the sentiments of one party, or of continuing the war without a hope of succour or countenance from any of the northern powers.

It is not impossible that the same sentiments which have induced our new masters to make such concessions to the Dutch, may contribute, in some shape or other, to give the general mediation new life and activity, and though from the present state of things, I do not expect that it will produce a General Peace, yet it may render us what is in my opinion a still more essential service, and settle the views and professions of the Bourbon Courts, by compelling them to articulate. It is time the film that has covered the eyes of all Europe should be removed, and nothing will appear so paradoxical to futurity, as that this state of blindness has continued so long.

I fancy all those who choose to remain in possession of their foreign employments may; at least, I see no room to think the contrary. You are fully acquainted with my sentiments on this topic—they are invariable.

The account of the King of Prussia's strength and activity is not so natural at his time of life as his peevishness and ill-humour — they seem all to unite against us.

LETTER FROM SIR J. HARRIS TO ALLEYNE FITZHERBERT, ESQ.*

Petersburg, 20th April, 1st May, 1782.

DEAR SIR,—Major delivered me your short epistle, enclosed in one from Carew, on Wednesday the 13th, 24th April. Our condescensions towards the Dutch are very agreeable here, and probably will give an entire new turn to the Mediation, which now will be exercised as much in our favour, as before it was likely to militate against us.

Peace with this Republic, reconciliation with America, and a hearty drubbing to the French and Spaniards, is a consummation most devoutly to be wished, I fear I must not say expected.

Pray is there any appearance of Ostend becoming a deposit for hemp, ship-timber, masts, &c. ? and that our enemies are to be allowed to come to this market to buy those articles ? Such a report was rumoured here some time ago, but it did not appear deserving of attention; I therefore give it you as a vague idea, and which will no further employ your thoughts than as it is confirmed by any appearances which may shew themselves where you are.

I should be glad to hear your sentiments on the demolition of the *Barrier-towns*.† I confess nothing amongst

* English Minister at Brussels.

† England and Holland gave the Low Countries, by the Peace of Utrecht, to the House of Austria, to serve as a barrier against France, on condition that they should not be alienated without the consent of these Powers. *Harris Papers.*

the numberless singular incidents I have been witness to during my political life, struck me more forcibly than the perfect indifference with which all Europe saw this measure resolved on, and carried into execution.

I begin to think, though I only think it, that at last the eyes of this Court will be opened; the whole tenor of the French behaviour in Holland, the undoubted proofs that they are in secret intelligence with the Turks, and the great latitude both branches of the House of Bourbon give themselves since they have attained a certain degree of force at sea, must necessarily alarm the Northern Powers. They, in the end, will not be less sufferers than we are.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE RIGHT HON. C. J. FOX.

Petersburg, 9th, 20th May, 1782.

Sir,—It is at no time an easy matter to convey a just idea of the situation and temper of this Court, or to point out means the most likely to give a favourable direction to its conduct and influence. Instability and levity have been its marked features since I have resided here, and these have so often led me astray in my conjectures, that I ever give them with the greatest diffidence. This is particularly increased at the present moment, when an equal degree of uncertainty seems to reign, both in the domestic and foreign operations of this Court.

The power of Prince Potemkin, and that of the Secretary's party, appear to be equiponderant, and neither has had sufficient weight to get rid of the present favourite, though both wish it, and though both have tried experiments to produce his dismission, which till now have ever

failed. The Prussian and Austrian influence seem also to be balanced; and, under engagements to both, it is impossible to say towards which of these Courts the Empress would incline, if they were at variance. I confess, however, the Austrian scale seems to be sinking, and that of Prussia rising. In regard to us, she certainly is infinitely more favourably disposed than she was some time ago. She thinks well of the new Administration, and every step it has hitherto taken has confirmed her in this opinion. She is angry to a degree with the Dutch, and far from being pleased with the French; but neither her anger against these, nor her apparent good-will towards us, is sufficiently confirmed to ground any solid system on. The most trifling incident may shift the scene, and, till this Court is once engaged in active measures, it never must be considered as having taken a decisive part.

In regard to favourable impressions to be made here through the medium of Foreign Courts, I can only say, that the influence of Prussia has done us infinite harm, and that the influence of Austria never has done us any good. One of my chief pursuits for awhile was, to diminish the one and increase the other; and it has been one of my chief concerns to observe, that though I was sufficiently successful in my efforts, that I brought down a great deal of ill-will on myself, without obtaining a single advantage for my Court. I now, therefore, can only add, that if it were possible to prevent His Prussian Majesty from doing us harm by his misrepresentations of our actions and sentiments, and to dissuade him from his manifest partiality to the French in all his transactions here, it would be of the utmost consequence. His Minister, for these last two years, has been the life and soul of my adversaries; and I fear, notwithstanding he bears himself outwardly with much more regard and cordiality, that he

still is so. My mission would have taken a very different turn, had this gentleman remained what he professed to be, neutral and impartial.

As to applications to the personal interests of individuals, it would be, I fear, a very useless expenditure of the public money, if it was to be applied to any other purpose than that of obtaining intelligence, of conveying trifling facts to the Empress's knowledge, and of shutting the mouths of inferior enemies; and these *articles* are, from excessive corruption, become so very dear here, that they alone require a very large sum. No *one* man, unless it be my friend, has influence enough to bias the Empress's opinion, or to direct her operations; and he is so enormously rich, that nothing less than a subsidy, even supposing him venal, could purchase him.

I must end this letter by one piece of advice, of the propriety of which I am much surer than of any I have hitherto given; that whatever is to be done, would be better done through any other man than through me. Besides the many reasons I have already given you, I am *used*, if I may be allowed the word. New faces and new habits are recommendations here, and mine have been too long before their eyes.

LETTER FROM MR. CHARLES J. FOX TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

St. James's, 21st May, 1782.

SIR,—I have received your letters, and laid them before the King. The Russian messenger with No. 1 (26th April) is not yet arrived. Your last despatch, which arrived last night by Major the messenger, is returned from His Majesty, who commands me to signify to you his full and entire approbation of your conduct upon this occasion. It

was impossible to have made more use of the step we took here than you appear to have done, and if things should turn out as favourably as they promise, much, undoubtedly, must be imputed to the dexterity and ability with which *you* have managed the business. Everything that has since passed, both here and in Holland, has been luckily enough calculated to maintain the present good dispositions in the Court of Petersburg, and I make no doubt but you have by this time made as dexterous and successful use of the letter which I wrote to Mons. Simolin, by His Majesty's command, on the 4th instant, as of that of the 29th of March.

I sent you by the last mail an account of Sir George Rodney's victory in the West Indies,* of which you will see the particulars in the Gazette herewith enclosed. If the news of this glorious event should be followed by some decisive step on the part of your Court in our favour, the affairs of this country would wear a very different appearance from what any one could have hoped some months ago. His Majesty commands me to acquaint you, for the information of your Court, that he has invested Mr. Grenville, at Paris, with full powers to make a proposal of Treaty to the Court of Versailles, offering, as the basis of a general peace, the independency of the Thirteen Colonies, and the Treaty of Paris, 1763. His Majesty has taken no step in this business without immediately communicating it to Her Imperial Majesty; and as he understood distinctly, in the case of Mr. Wentworth,

* On the 11th of April he defeated the French fleet, and took Admiral de Grasse prisoner. This action saved the West Indies, and was fought by the French with a desperate gallantry, perhaps unequalled in any of the subsequent battles of the Empire, howbeit, the present generation of Frenchmen, either from conceit or ignorance of history, appear to think that that epoch contains all their military glory.

that it was Her Imperial Majesty's wish that no means should be omitted that might tend to the object of peace, which Her Imperial Majesty has so sincerely at heart, His Majesty can be under no apprehension of Her Imperial Majesty's considering Mr. Grenville's negotiation as any mark of disrespect to the Mediation of their Imperial Majesties, but, on the contrary, relies upon her candour and favourable construction, that it will be considered as an additional proof of the sincerity with which he wishes to second the benevolent and pacific intentions of the two high Mediating powers. I shall certainly take the first opportunity of answering more at large the contents of your last despatch.

I am, with great regard and truth, Sir,
Your most obedient, humble servant,
C. J. Fox.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE RIGHT HON. C. J. FOX.

Petersburg, 31st May, 11th June, 1782.

Sir,—Nothing material has passed between me and the Russian Ministers, neither can I to-day add anything to what I wrote on Friday relative to the Dutch negotiation. The Russian messenger despatched from hence the 21st of last month is arrived in Holland, but we do not learn the effects he has produced. The language of the Dutch Ambassador here, could it be relied on, would destroy every hope of peace; it is insolent and disrespectful to a degree, but he is considered by this Court as what he really is, an ill-mannered insufficient man, acting solely under the influence of the French, to whom,

it is said, and I believe with great reason, that he is sold.

My principal motive for troubling you to-day with a cyphered letter is, to inform you of a very extraordinary conversation I had yesterday with the Prussian Minister. I have already said that he has lately sought frequent opportunities of expressing to me the high opinion his Master had of the new administration in England, the satisfaction he felt at being able to do business with them confidentially, and, in general, his disposition to revert to that system of intimacy and union which formerly subsisted between us.

Yesterday morning Count Goertz wrote me a note, in which, after giving me to understand that he had something to say to me which would give me pleasure, expressed a desire of seeing me immediately. Our interview took place in the afternoon. He began by reading to me an extract of a cyphered letter from the King of Prussia, dated 28th May, from his camp near Magdeburg, full of encomiums on the present British Ministry; of the satisfaction he receives from the confidence and friendship they seemed disposed to place in him, which he says are such, that he now sees an opening for renewing an alliance with the Court of London; and after dwelling on the utility of this connexion to both parties, he goes on by asking his Minister here whether he thinks such a measure would be agreeable to the Empress, and whether she might not be ultimately brought also to subscribe to it? Count Goertz, after reading this letter over to me twice, observed that it was accompanied by another, which contained the King of Prussia's meaning more fully, and which, from the strong persuasion that I would not make an ill use of it, he would not hesitate

informing me of. He said that for several years back his Master had been in vain striving to form a rational system in Europe; that the intrigues of the Court of Vienna on one side, and the repugnance he perceived in us from forming any connexion with him, had hitherto rendered all his attempts abortive, and had forced him into an appearance of intimacy with France he neither would nor wished to consolidate; that the necessity of such a rational system became every day more evident, and that he knew nothing more likely to produce it than a triple alliance between Great Britain, Prussia, and the Court of Petersburg. He did not doubt, from the present complexion of His Majesty's Ministers, that we should approve this plan, &c., &c.

I begged leave to ask whether the alliance he spoke of was to take place immediately, with the present war, as a *casus fœderis*, or whether only an eventual agreement was to be made now, and the Treaty itself concluded at the peace? I also desired him to tell me whether it was by the King of Prussia's order he spoke to me, or whether I owed this mark of confidence solely to his private friendship? Count Goertz answered that his Master had not been explicit as to the nature of the alliance, but that he was responsible this would easily be settled, and that, for his own part, he did not see why it should not take place out of hand, and that he believed (if it was properly managed) his Court would consent to give it immediate activity; that he had not positive orders to speak to me, but that he considered them as implied, since it was of the last importance that we should act in concert; that he could assure me his Master thought highly of me, and considered my having hitherto acted in opposition to him here merely as the

effect of orders I had received from home; that he was, therefore, sure he should be approved for having spoken to me, and again urged me to give him my opinion.

I told him very freely, that I considered the union he proposed highly desirable, and that I should be sincerely happy to contribute to its formation; that I could take upon me to say, that it would give the Empress pleasure to see our Courts drawing towards each other; and that the influence of his Master would certainly not diminish here, if he should profess himself as much a friend to England as he lately had appeared to be of France; that I saw no difficulty standing in the way of an immediate connexion between the Courts of London and Berlin; their hands were free, and it might be brought about directly, but that this Court stood in a different predicament, it was acting as sole Mediator between us and Holland, and as joint Mediator between us and our other enemies; and that as long as it was invested with these characters, it was not easy for it to form any connexion with a belligerent power; that besides, I did not know what engagements the Empress was under to the Emperor, nor how far the plan proposed would quadrate with these, &c., &c.

Gount Goertz readily admitted this, and said, from some late transactions here his Master, though her ally, need have no scruple of concealing his negotiations from Her Imperial Majesty. He then conversed a long while on the utility of this Triple Alliance, and spoke with such an appearance of zeal, warmth, and conviction, that if he is acting a part he is a most excellent comedian; at all events I have, I hope, not committed my Court; my great object was to say neither too much nor too little.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE C. J. FOX.

Petersburg, 7th, 18th June, 1782.

Not a day passes that the Prussian Minister does not seek an opportunity of conversing with me in the most amicable and confidential manner. If he can be relied on, a separate alliance with England is uppermost in his Master's thoughts. Count Goertz thinks that it might be concluded immediately, particularly if we would, in proposing it, mention our readiness to consent to exclude the present war from the *casus fœderis*, and content ourselves with the influence and weight of the Court of Berlin in our favour till the peace. He communicated to me on Sunday a letter you had written to Mons. de Lusi,* containing a short sketch of our present situation, and asking the King of Prussia's sentiments and opinion. The cordial and friendly style of this letter convinces me I have been right in observing a cordial and friendly conduct towards the Prussian Minister, and it relieves my mind of some doubts I had on that score. I shall continue to follow the same behaviour, avoiding as much as possible the giving any umbrage to the Austrian Minister.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE C. J. FOX.

Petersburg, 10th, 21st June, 1782.

Sir,—A very important secret, and which, though it has nothing to do with the other part of this despatch, I insert in it to prevent every possibility of its being dis-

* Prussian Minister in London.

covered that I know it, is, that the Empress has stopped the sailing of her fleets for the Mediterranean and North Sea; has ordered every ship fit for service to be got ready as soon as possible, and is determined, in case the Dutch continue to refuse the offers we make them for peace, to support her Mediation by a formidable armament. This intention is so profound a mystery, that I am almost afraid of mentioning it even in cypher: the resolution was taken on Thursday, in consequence, I hope, of my conversations with my friend and the secretary, but not a soul knows it but those very few who enjoy Her Imperial Majesty's entire confidence; and all the good effects it may produce would be lost for ever, if it was suspected I had discovered it prematurely. I can indeed venture to give it you as most authentic information, but you will forgive me if I again suggest the extreme necessity of your not appearing to know it. To whatever cause it is imputed, it must appear to be the Empress's own act and deed, to have emanated from herself, and not at the instigation of any Minister, either foreign or domestic; should this be the case, every good it may produce will vanish.

I mentioned in my last, my intention of remaining, till my friend's return, in the neighbourhood of Czarsco Zelo, from my being conscious of the great importance that, in the present moment, Prince Potemkin should receive his first impressions from me. He arrived at midnight on Tuesday, and immediately wrote me, in his own hand, the following concise, but expressive note: "*Vive la Grande Bretagne et Rodney; je viens d'arriver, mon cher Harris, devinez qui vous écrit, et venez me voir tout de suite.*" I was with him in an instant, and, after hearing from him the most friendly and cordial assur-

ances, and such as I had been accustomed to in the best days of our connexion, I entered with him on business.

It is needless to weary you, Sir, with a regular detail of all I said; I adapted my language and arguments to the character of the person to whom I was speaking, and did not observe that method and order in my reasonings, you will find I afterwards made use of when discoursing with the Secretary. I endeavoured to pique his ambition, to rouse him to activity, and, by developing to him the secret though certain springs which actuate the conduct of our enemies, to point out to him at how cheap a rate he might purchase glory and immortal honour, both for His Imperial Mistress and for himself. I succeeded beyond my expectations; he entered warmly into my idea; joined issue in all I said, and promised me immediate and effectual support. I passed the greatest part of that night and yesterday in his company, during which time he frequently went up to the Empress, and ever returned in the highest spirits; he constantly made me fresh reports of her regard for England, of her esteem and approbation of its Ministers, and though our conversation naturally wandered, in so many hours, from one subject to another, yet he ever brought it back to our successes, on which he spoke with an enthusiastic satisfaction that, till now, I thought none but an Englishman could feel. Various collateral circumstances leave me no doubt of his sincerity. If you ask me, why this sudden change? I shall be at a loss for a reply. It is certainly not attributable to any efforts of mine, neither is it to be deduced from any system he wishes to pursue. It must be sought for in the character of this very extraordinary man, who, every day, affords me new matter of amazement and surprise. Our conversation took place

immediately on his coming off a journey of three thousand wersts, which he had performed in sixteen days, during which period he had slept only three times; and besides visiting several estates, and every church* he came near, he had been exposed to all the delays and tedious ceremonies of the military and civil honours, which the Empress had ordered should be bestowed on him wherever he passed, yet he did not bear the smallest appearance of fatigue, either in body or mind, and on our separating I was certainly the more exhausted of the two.

On leaving him (after a few hours' repose) I waited on the Secretary; my object was the same, but the means I employed were different. I was now speaking officially to a confidential servant of the Empress, and not addressing myself to a powerful friend, whose bright and soaring genius does not submit to the formal rules of a regular ministerial conference. I proceeded, therefore, as I before said, with order and method. I began by animadverting on the different complexion and designs of our enemies, at the head of which I placed France, and endeavoured to persuade him of what I am firmly persuaded myself, that all others act under its absolute direction either from blindness, from fear, or through intrigue. Spain, I observed, since the signature of the Family Compact, might be considered as one of its provinces. It was sufficient to read this Treaty, and to consider the relative position of the two kingdoms, to be convinced of the truth of my assertion.

Holland stood nearly in the same predicament. We

* Potemkin had a mania for visiting churches, and even during his most palmy days felt an inward longing for the cloister.—Vide his Life, translated from the German.

heard much of the violence of party in that country; of the impossibility of inducing the people to submit to peace, and of their immovable intention of first revenging the supposed injury we had done them. Such was the language of the partisans of France, but it was not the language of truth, for it is certain that at Amsterdam,* the source and centre of faction, the plurality are, at this moment, warm in their wishes for a reconciliation with England, and would see with pleasure any efforts Russia might employ to reconcile us; but they are deterred by the threats of France, alarmed for their possessions in its hands, and dare not move without waiting for leave from Versailles. France, therefore, *alone* is the cause of the continuation of the Dutch quarrel, and keeps it up merely to facilitate its own designs.

I drew my conclusion by observing, that if the Empress was sincerely bent on restoring peace, she must speak a firm and decisive language, support the effects of our late successes by a vigorous and spirited exertion, and by letting her political influence and her national strength go hand in hand, command the event she desired to promote. The Secretary listened with great attention to what I said, and though he has an excellent memory, minuted down a great part of it. Nothing could be more friendly than his assurances, and he repeatedly promised me, that every word I had said should find its way to the Empress.

* Amsterdam, tempted by the prospect of a Free Trade with America, was the first town in the States to join France in supporting our revolted Colonies.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE C. J. FOX.

Petersburg, 24th June, 5th July, 1782.

I NOW, Sir, can have the pleasure of assuring you, that Her Imperial Majesty sees the object of Mr. Grenville's* journey to Paris in its true light.

I was sorry, in conversing with the Vice-Chancellor on the Dutch business, to find that this deluded people still persist in their error; that it is probable they will decline the advantageous peace held out to them, and be inconsiderate enough to reject with indecency the amicable offers made them by the Empress. France will be responsible for all the evils this their obstinacy may bring down on them, since it appears every day more clear that they act entirely under the impulsions of that Court, without a will or sentiment of their own.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO SIR ROBERT M. KEITH, VIENNA.

Petersburg, 24th June, 5th July, 1782.

SIR,—The Empress is now as well disposed as I could wish her to be, and, if we can keep her free from the effect of dark intrigues and malicious insinuations, will go a good way to serve us. My great antagonist, the Prussian Minister,† has suspended his hostile operations, and is full of expressions of friendship, cordiality, and confidence. You may be assured I know how to appreciate

* Vide Mr. Fox's letter, page 508.

† When Mr. Fox came in, Frederick relaxed in his hatred to England, which was identified with his dislike to Lord Bute and Lord North; and Mr. Fox met him more than half-way.

them, but it would be very awkward not to meet him with an appearance of reciprocal good-will, particularly as I have more credible authority than his for believing his Master is dissatisfied with France, and inclined to draw towards Great Britain.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE C. J. FOX.

Petersburg, 5th, 16th July, 1782.

SIR,—I mentioned on Friday the personal dislike the Empress had taken to the Dutch Ambassador, and that she had ordered her Minister at the Hague to solicit his recall, and at the same time, by her secret interposition, put a stop to his marriage here, which was on the point of being concluded. I have since learned that these marks of her displeasure are owing to two intercepted letters which the Court of Denmark has communicated to her, written about two months ago by this Ambassador to the Pensionary Blyswick,* in which his Excellency speaks very disrespectfully of the Empress, treats with great indifference her power of doing the Republic any harm, and, after taking upon himself to say that they need be under no apprehensions from this quarter, as well from the irresolute character of the Empress as from the disorderly state of her Empire, he advises the Pensionary to induce the States to persist in their refusal to consent to a separate peace on any terms. The Ambassador himself is ignorant of this fact; he is astonished at the abrupt breaking off of his marriage, and the mystery will not be cleared up to him till he receives his recall, which, I presume, the States will not venture to

* One of the three leading Patriots in Holland.

delay. I could have wished that Her Imperial Majesty had been less hasty on this occasion, and that she had waited to see whether the opinion and advice Mr. Wassenaer gave was not perfectly conformable to the sentiments and disposition of the Republic. Her anger then would have had a more worthy object, and produced much more solid advantages to us, than the dismission of an Ambassador, who, though he is blindly devoted to France, and violent in his animosity against Great Britain, has neither capacity nor judgment enough to do harm.

The new Spanish Minister * does not appear to be a formidable adversary. He is very infirm in his health, and talkative beyond measure. He has declared here, in the strongest manner, that his Master will exhaust every farthing in his coffers, and employ every man in his service, rather than consent to a peace with us, unless we previously give up Gibraltar; and that not only it must be a preliminary article, but a Spanish garrison actually in the place, before the definitive treaty is signed. This is such high and absurd language, that it does not deserve confutation, and will, I am sure, disgust the Empress without any commentary of mine.

DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE C. J. FOX.

Petersburg, 8th, 19th July, 1782.

SIR,—It will have sufficiently appeared, from my preceding despatches, that the Prussian Minister has had repeated instructions from Potzdam, to endeavour to convince me that the dispositions and sentiments of his

* The Marquis de la Torre.

Master were very materially changed, and that, so far from any longer intending us any evil, he was now inclined to connect himself intimately with Great Britain. Both Count Goertz and myself, however, were not clear of the manner and time in which he was disposed this alliance should take place; but a very interesting despatch this gentleman read to me yesterday clears up all my doubts, unless it may be supposed, which I am far from doing, that the whole is a plan concerted between the King of Prussia and his Minister here to deceive and dupe me.

The letter I speak of is as follows, and it made so forcible an impression on me, that I am sure I translate the words in which it is conceived. It is dated Potzdam, the 6th July, and the King writes thus to Count Goertz: "I desire very sincerely an alliance with England, and approve entirely your endeavours to promote it in your conversations with Sir James Harris. I, however, do not approve its being set on foot without the previous participation of Russia, as well because such a measure, on my side, would be inconsistent with the principles of my connexion with the Empress, as because if she did not accede to this alliance it would be useless; for the English cannot expect that I should compel the Republic of Holland to revert to its ancient system of friendship and union with them, and it would, moreover, immediately engage me in a war with France and the Emperor, from which they would derive no benefit. The alliance I wish for is between Russia, Denmark, England, and myself. Great Britain, by this means, would be at once assisted by all the Danish fleet, and by part of that of Russia; and I, from the succours I might derive from that quarter, should have nothing to apprehend from the united force of the Courts of Versailles and

Vienna. I should think, if Sir James Harris was instructed to propose to the Empress this Quadruple Union,—it might be effected in two months, for I am responsible no difficulties or objections will arise on the side of the Danes. It is true, indeed, that this system would not quite quadrate with the joint Mediation in which Her Imperial Majesty is engaged, but if she was made rightly to understand its importance, and to see how much greater a part she would act then than now, I have no doubt she might be induced to subscribe to it."

This letter of the King's needs no comment; you perceive, Sir, the manner in which he is ready to unite with us, and to make the present war a *casus fœderis*. I wait with the greatest impatience your orders on this point, and till I receive them shall conduct myself so as to be prepared myself, and prepare the Russian Ministry, for what I may have to say.

LETTER FROM LORD SHELBURNE TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

Shelburne House, 27th July, 1782.

My dear Sir,—I am glad to take the opportunity of a messenger, to acknowledge the receipt of your very kind letter by Sir Gilbert Elliot. I accept, without hesitation, the offer of your friendship, in all the extent you make it. I do it with less scruple, because my present situation* may enable me to return it, with every justice both to the King and the public. I flatter myself that it is in the power of your present situation to render the King and the public most essential service. The employment,

* Lord Rockingham died on the 1st of July, and Lord Shelburne became Prime Minister. Fox resigned, and Lord Grantham succeeded him at the Foreign Office.

whatever it has been, must in the present moment be pleasant because it is important. It may require great activity and address towards the Court of Russia; on ours nothing can be plainer and more simple. You have to act under an united Ministry, which acts with the full confidence of the King. Our object is peace, if it can be had on reasonable terms; if not, to carry on the war with all the vigour possible, and in either peace or war, to cultivate the Empress's friendship, confidence, and esteem. She can make the peace, or turn the war, and in either case cannot fail to command the *hearts* of this country, which you know always govern it.

I am highly flattered that my name is not forgot by the Empress; I hope my principles are remembered also, as they have uniformly led me to everything respectful to the Court of Russia. We are ready to make every sacrifice, provided she once agrees to *commit* herself. You must imagine, when I say this, that we look for something more than *words* in our actual situation. We wish to avoid the *mediation*, because we have no confidence in the Court of Vienna, and are ignorant of the private connexion which appears to have taken place between the Imperial Courts. But why will not the Empress dictate, where she can do it with such infinite dignity and éclat?

You sent your letter to me by Sir Gilbert Elliot, whose good manners and good sense captivated me. I do not like to separate any person from his habits, but I was very sorry to find in him such as are likely to connect him with an opposition which stands on no public ground whatever.

In the meantime, be assured of the friendship and regard with which I shall always remain, my dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient servant, SHELBURNE.

LETTER FROM LORD GRANTHAM TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

Whitehall, 28th July, 1782.

DEAR HARRIS,—I cannot let the messenger go without a few private lines, to tell you how sincerely I am yours. My hurry is beyond all I ever knew, for I was sent for from Yorkshire, where I was in the most perfect retirement and quietness imaginable. I have been so little used, and I am afraid to say so little earnest, in public transactions, that, notwithstanding all my supposed qualifications, my situation is as new to me as the Eastern languages. I will, however, say nothing of myself, but that I will endeavour to do my duty while in Office, and that alone can carry me through it.

I have much satisfaction indeed in finding you in such high esteem, and so deservedly so. Your address and your labours surpass those of anybody that is employed. The King thinks so, and so does Lord Shelburne. He shewed me your private letter, and answered it, I trust to your satisfaction. We all agree in our most serious wish that you should not think of coming away now.

The change of tone in your Court and in Prussia are very extraordinary indeed, and much owing, I really believe, to the language which C. Fox has been holding. His measures were great, though his execution precipitate, and he had the great advantage that his splendid talent secured him—a defence adequate to any emergency. I am very fearful my newness and caution may be misinterpreted, and my necessary reserve may be called ministerial. Indeed, I know I was thought when I wrote from Spain to be dry; so I beseech you to add unction in your execution of directions which you receive through my hands. Labour the point of trying if your Court will admit Prussia to the Mediation. It is much desired here,

and in fact Fox promised it to him, whether of his own accord or by the instructions of the Prussian Minister I cannot tell. I have just parted from Simolin, who has shewn me his account of what passed between us, very fairly. I am very curious indeed to know whether Russia will ever move. I am animated by your accounts, but must confess that all the promises of your Court are too conditional, and, I dread its mutability. Fitzherbert's is a delicate commission;* I think the French mean to try the event of a campaign. Grenville's coming away was certainly from his friendship for Fox, and has done harm there; but either France will come to some terms, or put herself in the wrong, and so give us an advantage with the Americans, and all Europe will see the ambition of France clogs the Pacification. Then will be the time, if not before, for the North to exert itself.

At present our Ministers go on very well and united. I mean to do my own business, and not meddle with our internal Parliamentary politics.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE C. J. FOX.

Petersburg, 22nd July, 2nd Aug., 1782.

MY DEAR SIR,—It was with very great concern that I learnt by a letter I received yesterday from Mr. Fraser, that you had resigned the seals on the 4th instant.

No Minister ever, in so short a time, did so much for his country as yourself. Your resignation cannot be sufficiently lamented by all those who know how to estimate the value of an able and judicious counsellor in the hour of danger and dilemma. You had restored to

* He took Mr. Grenville's place at Paris.

us confidence and consideration on the Continent, and I had began to flatter myself that five years' anxiety and disappointment would have been terminated by a moment of the most complete satisfaction I could feel as a servant of the public: as such, therefore, I cannot too sensibly express my concern at being deprived of your instructions and advice; they cannot, in my esteem, be replaced.

I trust that what I expressed to you *as my wish** will soon be complied with: if it should not, I shall think myself justified in signifying it as my *intention.* I am desirous of having an early opportunity of convincing you of the sincerity of what I now write, and that, whether you return to power or remain unemployed, I shall be equally happy and proud to call myself your friend and follower.

NOTE FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO WILLIAM FRASER, ESQ.

Petersburg, 29th July, 9th Aug., 1782.

My dear Sir,—I am on the tiptoe of expectation; and my prayers are all addressed that Lord Howe may meet, and give a good account of the combined fleet.

EXTRACT OF A DESPATCH FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD GRANTHAM.

Petersburg, 5th, 16th Aug., 1782.

My Lord,—I sincerely congratulate your Lordship on your appointment to be Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I shall obey, with the greatest satisfaction, and to the utmost of my abilities, everything you may have in command for me.

* To be recalled.

I did not lose a moment in informing the Russian Ministry, that the change which had lately taken place amongst His Majesty's confidential servants would not produce the smallest alteration in the system adopted, which, I assured him, would be invariably pursued. Mons. de Simolin had already expressed the same sentiments, and I could perceive it gave great satisfaction.

The scene here is materially changed from what it was when I wrote the letters, the reception of which you acknowledge in those by the messenger. Both the Dutch and general Mediations are no longer the primary objects; nearer concerns employ the Empress's thoughts. There is no hope of her taking any vigorous steps against Holland, and I am happy to observe that your expectations on this score were not very high. A *Turkish war*, if it happens, and it still seems likely, will open a new order of things, in which I think we can be no losers.

LETTER FROM MR. FOX TO SIR JAMES HARRIS.

St. James's Street, 23rd Aug., 1782.

DEAR SIR,—I have just received your letter in cypher, and return you many thanks for it before I have read it. In my present situation it will not probably be possible for me to answer it. All I can say is, that I heartily wish that my successors may listen as much to your advice as I did, and that they may be as well (for they cannot be better) inclined to meet your wishes in every respect.

I am, dear sir,

Yours most sincerely,

C. J. FOX.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD GRANTHAM.

Petersburg, 16th, 27th Aug., 1782.

My Lord,—I would willingly save your Lordship as much trouble as possible, and, fully convinced that I have more leisure for writing than you for reading, I shall endeavour to spare you the labour (if you have not already done it) of turning over my voluminous correspondence, by setting before your eyes in one letter nearly all I have done since I have been here. It will give you the best idea I can afford of the situation of this country, of the characters of those that govern it, and of the means the most proper to be employed to obtain their good-will. It will, at the same time, serve as a kind of justification of my conduct, if it should appear to you, as it possibly may, not to have been always wise and considerate.

On my arrival here I found this Court very different from what it had been described to me. So far from any partiality to England, its leanings were entirely French. The King of Prussia (then in possession of the Empress's ear) was exerting his influence against us; Count Panin assisted him powerfully; Lacy and Corberon, the Bourbon Ministers, were artful and intriguing; Prince Potemkin had been wrought upon by them, and the whole tribe which surrounded the Empress; the Schuwaloffs, Stroganoffs, and Chernicheffs, were what they still are, *Garçons perruquiers de Paris.* Events seconded their endeavours; the assistance the French affected to afford Russia in settling its disputes with the Porte, and the two Courts being immediately after united as Mediators at the peace of Teschen, contributed not a little to reconcile them to each other.

I felt the impracticability of succeeding in any commis-

sion with which I should be intrusted while things remained in this position. I felt, too, the danger and indecency of opening my mission by a personal attack, though I well knew, till the persons were removed, the impressions would remain. I was not, therefore, surprised that all my negotiations with Count Panin, from February 1778 till July 1779, should be unsuccessful. As he meant to prevent, not to promote, an alliance, it was in vain we made concessions to obtain it; he ever started fresh difficulties, had ever fresh obstacles ready. A very serious evil resulted, in the mean while, from my apparent confidence in him. He availed himself of it to convey, in his reports to the Empress, *not the language I employed and sentiments I actually expressed, but the language and sentiments he wished I should employ and express.* He was equally careful to conceal her opinions and feelings from me; and while he described England to her as obstinate, overbearing, and reserved, he described the Empress to me as displeased, disgusted, and indifferent to our concerns; and he was so convinced that by this double misrepresentation he had shut up to me every avenue of success, that at the time when I presented to him the Spanish declaration, he ventured to say to me *ministerially*, "That Great Britain had, by its own haughty conduct, brought down all its misfortunes on itself; that they were now at their height, that we must consent to any concessions to obtain peace, and that we could expect neither assistance from our friends nor forbearance from our enemies." I had temper enough not to give way to my feelings on this occasion. I made him no reply, but took from that moment the determined resolution to consider him as an enemy to my country I could never reclaim, and against whom, therefore, I was bound

to act with all my force. His very inimical behaviour, and the critical conjuncture, justified my having recourse to new and unusual methods.

I applied without loss of time to Prince Potemkin, and by his means the Empress condescended to see me alone at Peterhoff. I was so fortunate, in this interview, not only to efface all the bad impressions she had against us, but, by stating in its true light our situation, and the inseparable interests of Great Britain and Russia, to raise in her mind a decided resolution to assist us. This resolution she declared to me in express words, and in much stronger terms than I thought proper to insert in my official correspondence.

In a Court like this, where everything moves in so narrow a circle, everything transpires; neither my private conference with the Empress, nor the friendly intentions it had produced, could long remain secret. Count Panin was the first who knew it, and, as well because I had ventured to apply to any one besides himself as from the success of my application, he became from that moment my implacable and inveterate enemy. He not only thwarted by falsehoods, and by a most undue exertion of his influence, my public negotiations, but employed every means the lowest and most vindictive malice could suggest to depreciate and injure me personally; and from the very infamous accusations with which he charged me (had I been prone to fear) I might have apprehended the most infamous attacks at his hands. This relentless persecution still continues: it has outlived his ministry, and though he is now rejected, disgraced, and humiliated, yet I still feel the baneful effects of his unforgiving temper. It operated in its full vigour at the time I am speaking of, and notwithstanding the positive assurances I had received from the Empress herself, he found means first to stagger,

and afterwards to alter her resolutions. He was, indeed, very officiously assisted by His Prussian Majesty, who, at that time, was as much bent in oversetting our interests here as he now seems eager to restore them.

I was not, however, disheartened by this first disappointment, and by redoubling my efforts, I have twice more, during the course of my mission, brought the Empress to the verge of standing forth our professed friend, and each time my expectations were grounded on assurances from *her own mouth.** The first was at the moment when our adversaries conjured up the Armed Neutrality, the other when Minorca was offered her.

Although on the first of these occasions I found the same opposition from the same quarter I had experienced before, yet I am compelled to say, that the principal cause of my failure was attributable to the very awkward manner in which we replied to the famous Neutral Declaration of February 1780. As I well knew from what quarter the blow would come, I was prepared to parry it. My opinion was, "If England feels itself strong enough to do without Russia, let it reject at once these new-fangled doctrines; but if its situation is such as to want assistance, let it yield to the necessity of the hour, recognize them as far as they relate to Russia alone, and, by a well-timed act of complaisance, insure itself a powerful friend." My opinion was not received; an ambiguous and trimming answer was given; we seemed equally afraid to accept or dismiss them. I was instructed secretly to oppose, but avowedly to acquiesce in them; and some unguarded expressions of one of His Majesty's then confidential servants* made use of, in speaking to Mons. Simolin, in direct contradiction to the temperate and cordial language that Minister had heard from Lord Stor-

* Lord Hillsborough.

mont, irritated the Empress to the last degree, and completed the dislike and bad opinion she ever entertained of that Administration. Our enemies took advantage of these circumstances; they heaped coals of fire on our heads, and, at the same time, by making her believe that the work of their cabals was a measure which would immortalize her, and which we alone opposed, so wrought on her passions, that what a few civil words would have done away in the beginning, will now be an everlasting and dangerous thorn in our side.

I suggested the idea of giving up Minorca to the Empress, because, as it was evident to me, we should at the Peace be compelled to make sacrifices, it seemed to me wiser to make them to our friends than to our enemies. The idea was adopted at home in its whole extent, and nothing could be more perfectly calculated to the meridian of this Court, than the judicious instructions I received on this occasion from Lord Stormont. Why this project failed I am still at a loss to learn. I never knew the Empress incline so strongly to any one measure as she did to this, before I had my full powers to treat; nor was I ever more astonished than when I found her shrink from her purpose, when they arrived. I imputed it, at the time, in my own mind, to the rooted aversion she had for our Ministry, and to her total want of confidence in them; but I since am strongly disposed to believe that she consulted the Emperor on the subject, and that he not only prevailed on her to decline the offer, but betrayed the secret to France, and that it thus became public. I cannot otherwise account for this rapid change of sentiment in the Empress, particularly as Prince Potemkin (whatever he might be in other transactions) was certainly in this cordial and sincere in his support, and both from what I saw at the time, and from what

has since come to my knowledge, had its success as much at heart as myself.

The proposal relative to Minorca was the last attempt I made to induce the Empress to stand forth. I had exhausted my strength and resources; the freedom with which I had spoken in my last interview with her, though respectful, had displeased, and, from this period till the removal of the late Administration, I have been reduced to act on the defensive. The cabals and intrigues of my adversaries bore down heavy on me; my friends, or rather *my friend* was become cold and uncertain: and I have had more difficulty in preventing the Empress from doing harm, than I ever had in attempting to engage her to do us good. It was to prevent evil that I inclined strongly for the acceptation of her single Mediation between us and Holland, when Her Imperial Majesty first offered it. The extreme dissatisfaction she expressed at our refusal, justified my opinion, and I took upon me when it was proposed a second time, to urge the necessity of its being agreed to, (although I knew it to be in contradiction to the sentiments of my principal,) since I firmly believed, had we again declined it, the Empress would, in a moment of anger, have joined the Dutch against us. As it is, all has gone on well; our judicious conduct has transferred to them the ill humour she originally was in with us, and she now is as partial to our cause, as she was before partial to theirs.

Since the new Ministry in England, my road has been made smoother; the great and new path struck out by your predecessor, Mr. Fox, and which you, my Lord, pursue, has operated a most advantageous change in our favour on the Continent. Nothing, indeed, but events which come home to her will, I believe, ever induce Her

Imperial Majesty to take an active part; but there is now a strong glow of friendship in our favour; she approves our measures; she trusts our Ministry, and she gives way to that predilection she certainly has for our nation. Our enemies know and feel this, and it keeps them in awe.

This is a succinct but accurate sketch of what has passed at this Court from the day of my arrival at Petersburg to the present hour. Several inferences may be deduced from it. That the Empress is led by her passions, not by reason and argument; that her prejudices are very strong, easily acquired, and, when once fixed, irremovable; while, on the contrary, there is no sure road to her good opinion; that, even when obtained, it is subject to eternal fluctuation, and liable to be biassed by the most trifling incidents; that, till she is fairly embarked in a plan, no assurances can be depended on: but that, when once fairly embarked, she never retracts, and may be carried any lengths; that, with very bright parts, an elevated mind, an uncommon sagacity, she wants judgment, precision of idea, reflection, and *l'esprit de combinaison.* That her Ministers are either ignorant of, or indifferent to the welfare of the State, and act from a passive submission to her will, or from motives of party and private interests. That whoever is fated to negotiate here must have as much patience as prudence; be active himself, yet submit to procrastination in others; have sinews not to be shaken by anxiety and disappointment. He must not negotiate by rule, or observe the precepts of Wickfort; he must watch the temper of the day, catch the lucky moment as it flies, strike while the iron is hot, negotiate by assault, if I may be allowed the expression, and never expect to carry his point by regular approaches.

That the distance between London and Petersburg, * and the necessity of writing for orders, makes this very difficult for an English Minister, and last, though not least, that I am worn out, *usé*. A new face, new manners, new flatterers, are necessary here; and though my long residence may, for some reasons, have made me fit for this post, yet the methods I have been compelled to employ to obtain my knowledge and experience, have laid me open to so much personal animosity, that in all essential points I am become absolutely disqualified for it. I am so convinced of this truth, that I should feel myself deficient in a very material part of my duty, if I was silent on the subject.

You, I am sure, my Lord, know me too well to suppose me so void of ambition as to wish to leave this important and honourable post from private motives *alone*, and still less can you think me capable of concealing them under the mask of regard for the service; and the strongest proof that can be produced, that I feel myself irremediably disabled to remain, is my being desirous of leaving the Foreign line, at the time you are at the head of the Foreign Department.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD GRANTHAM.

Petersburg, 16th, 27th Aug., 1782.

You are very good, my dear Lord, in finding leisure to write me such instructive and agreeable private letters.

Your partiality for me makes you rate my merits vastly above their mark; the only thing perhaps in which you and your colleagues in the Cabinet are mistaken, is

* The journey from London to Petersburg, at this time, took the couriers about a month to perform.

the false idea you entertain of the nature and utility of my address and labours.

I cannot describe to you my satisfaction in having a chief with whom *j'ose m'épancher*, nor what a pleasant sensation it is to speak on business with the same freedom as on private concerns.

I shall not fail, in obedience to your commands, to decorate your instructions with proper flourishings, when any are necessary. They will, I am sure, want nothing else, and at this, from having held the *encensoir* so long, I am an adept.

It is a very nice and difficult commission you give me, to set aside the Joint Mediation, and to substitute the King of Prussia in the room of the Emperor in a moment when this last is in the meridian of his favour, and when the pleasing him seems the primary object of Her Imperial Majesty. You see what I have *said*, for I have *done* nothing, and this, contrary to the usual practice of this Court, must be a work of time, and brought about gradually.

I can clearly remark that the Empress doubts the stability of the present Ministry, suspects that farther changes may take place, and, in common with all other foreigners, has not an idea what is meant by Opposition and Resignations: to explain it to them would be explaining snow to an African prince.

The terms on which the French set out are so exorbitant, and those which they still reserve to themselves the liberty of claiming so indefinite, that I own I should not be satisfied to see a negotiation for peace set on foot on such preliminaries. After the enormous sacrifices they require, and after proposing advantageous arrangements for themselves, in the four quarters of the world,

what do they mean by *restitutions* and *compensations?* I strongly disapprove Tom Grenville's* abrupt departure from Paris. I think every man has a right to have his opinions and leanings, and is to be praised for adhering to them; but in times like these, everything should give way to the public good.

I have called one of my letters, on office paper, private, and written it with my own hand, and without a number, in order that you may use it or not as you please; I should wish it not to remain in the office, as parts of it are reflections on a Ministry† I have no right to criticise. The Minister who held the indiscreet language to Mons. Simolin was Lord Hillsborough; he threatened, and, what was worse *persiffléd* the Russian fleet; and Simolin was forced to put this unguarded and unpleasant *plaisanterie* in his reports, since Lord Hillsborough had repeated it to the Prussian and Dane.

You may be curious to know what I call *infamous accusations*, and why I might have apprehended *infamous attacks* from Count Panin. He accused me (and made the Grand-Duke actually believe it) of having attempted to set fire to the Russian fleet. He accused me of a design of poisoning the Grand Duke and Duchess and their children, by endeavouring to persuade them that some geraniums, and other equally inoffensive plants I had sent the Grand-Duchess, were venomous. He who can forge such lies might have put into my salad some herbs less innocuous than geraniums; and the supposing him capable of it, cannot be imputed to an uncharitable disposition.

* Sent to negotiate the peace with France. He left Paris and returned home when his friend Fox resigned.

† Lord North's.

The events to which the present disturbances in the Crimea may give rise, are so important that I have made it my duty to endeavour to obtain every possible information I could relative to them. I have met with more than usual difficulties to get at such as might not mislead your Lordship. The strictest secrecy, under pain of the severest punishments, is enjoined to those who, from their situations, may receive orders on this subject, which is itself discussed in a private correspondence between the Emperor and Empress, without any of their Ministers being consulted before they take their resolutions, or informed of them after they are taken.

The Empress, from the beginning, thought them serious; considered them as arising from the secret influence of Foreign Powers, and, from the first instant they came to her knowledge, made such a disposition of her army as it would be idle to form against the Tartars alone.

Her Imperial Majesty also wrote at the same time to Vienna, claiming the Emperor's assistance, as well in virtue of their secret alliance as on account of their private friendship; and I can, in great confidence, assure your Lordship, that the Emperor has answered, that he was not only ready to comply with what was his duty as an ally, but that she might employ him to the whole extent of his faculties; his own words were, *she might consider him as her General, and his army as her own.* This answer came about a fortnight ago, and is known to no one; and from this moment the Empress, instead of fearing a Turkish war, began most ardently to wish for one.

The Empress looks forward to the chimerical idea of establishing an Eastern Empire. The Emperor (supposing him sincere in his assurances) has views wiser and more practicable. He aims at the acquisition of Bosnia and

Servia, and other parts of the Turkish empire adjacent to, and formerly belonging to, the kingdom of Hungary. He possibly, too, may endeavour to lay hold of some of the possessions of the Porte on the Adriatic, and I should think would not be over-scrupulous of encroaching on the Venetians, if any of their territories came in his way. I am the more inclined to believe this, as when he was here, I know, in a private conversation with the Empress, he declared that he never wished to recover Silesia, and never would disturb the peace of Germany; that his sole ambition was, *de renvoyer les Turcs plus loin*, and, if possible, to increase his Italian dominions.

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO HUGH ELLIOT, ESQ., BERLIN.

Petersburg, 16th, 27th Aug., 1782.

THE only pleasure I received from your letter by Flint was, the undoubted proofs it contained of your friendship for and confidence in me; they cannot be bestowed on one who better deserves them, nor does there exist any one who wishes more thoroughly to see a clearing up of your horizon than myself.

It is ridiculous sending you private news from England by way of Petersburg. Your brother seems disposed to adhere to those who are gone out; I am too far from the scene of action to judge whether he has done wisely or not. I know both those who have resigned, and those who are come in, treat me much better than I deserve, and comply with everything I ask, or wish, but one; and this I shall persist in asking with all decent obstinacy, till they are tired of refusing me. I have had my surfeit

of this country, and no Foreign Minister ever drank so near the dregs as I have done.

I am perplexed in the extreme to know what to make of the present disposition of your Old Gentleman. He must employ as much of his time to deceive me, as other Sovereigns generally do in the whole business of the nation, if he is not sincere. Every post brings despatches from Potzdam, which I see and read, and they contain everything we could wish.

Here, the troubles in Crimea threaten very serious consequences; a Turkish war is probable; I think the Empress wishes it. She thinks herself quite sure of the Emperor, and possibly the moment for carrying their romantic plan into execution is at hand. Joseph will keep it up till he has got Bosnia and Servia, and then plant Her Imperial Majesty, and leave her to the formation of an eastern empire on her own bottom. This will be the breaking up of their union, but before, many events may arise, and Europe be in combustion. I have advised keeping aloof at home, and not committing ourselves on any side too far. We stand on good grounds. I trust our enemies will be too intoxicated with their numbers and prospect of success to hold out anything like reasonable terms of pacification, and that we shall be able to breathe moderation and forbearance in our political conduct, and use neither one nor the other in our military one.

I am satisfied we have got innate force enough not only to make no concessions, but to compel those who want us to make them to ask pardon for their presumption. Fighting, not negotiating, *est notre fort.*

LETTER FROM SIR JAMES HARRIS TO LORD GRANTHAM.

Petersburg, 6th, 17th Sept., 1782.

My dear Lord,—You are too much my friend to praise me merely because praises are agreeable. I have, therefore, infinitely more satisfaction in being told by you that I am thought well of where it should be, than if it came from any other quarter, because I am sure it is true and sincere.

It is now twenty years and upwards since I first had the honour of attending you in your post-chaise to Christ Church, when Mr. Reekes tormented you to eat lobsters, and Mr. Hooper, my worthy relation,* was in admiration at the landscapes you drew with an allumette dipped in a tallow candle. I little thought then, that ever it would be my lot to carry on an official correspondence with you, and I believe you never supposed I should be equal to the task, for if I remember right, I was at that time a forward puppy, a spoilt overgrown school-boy, with several of the vices of manhood joined to the faults of childhood. I remember perfectly well the good humour and indulgence with which you treated me, and your kindness at that time laid the foundation of a friendship and attachment nothing but the imbecility of old age will destroy.

It is a cruel thing to be far removed from one's old connexions, and it is in vain I look round me here for an acquaintance of longer standing than the date of my first audience; my cook and one *valet de chambre* excepted, I have nothing near me which I ever saw before I came

* Mr. Hooper was the son of Lady Dorothy Ashley, daughter of the second Lord Shaftesbury. Sir James Harris was grandson of her sister Lady Elizabeth. He left Sir James, Heron Court, and all his property, in 1794.

into this country, unless I may reckon a coat of Vigonia cloth of Castilian memory.

I hope Gibraltar* will wear as well; our friend Crillon and his floating batteries will then have eight years longer to amuse themselves. La Torre, who is a good-natured warm man, and who possesses *every requisite* to obtain the *Grandeeship* he aims at, would have proved to me the legal right Don Carlos has to this fortress. He was terribly prolix in his arguments, and they would, perhaps, have lasted as long as a game of chess, if I had not recalled to his mind that it was *because we had Gibraltar*, that his Royal Master had a *legal right* to the Crown of Spain, since *both* were equally at *our* disposal at the peace of Utrecht, and we, with more generosity than wisdom, gave his father the kingdom on condition we should be left in quiet possession of the rock.

I have from the beginning preached the great importance it is to our best friends, that we should not lose our Mediterranean possessions, but it has been *vox clamantes in deserto*. Nobody heard me.

* At this time defended and eventually maintained by Gen. Elliot, afterwards Lord Heathfield.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:
Printed by S. and J. Bentley, Wilson, and Fley,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

00032282

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016